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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SCHOOL.EFFECTIVENESS AND INEFFECTIVENESS: PARENTS', PRINCIPALS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

BY

NEVILLE TOM HIGHETT

©

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND INEFFECTIVENESS: PARENTS', PRINCIPALS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS' PERSPECTIVES submitted by NEVILLE TOM HIGHETT in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceptions of three constituent groups concerning school effectiveness and ineffectiveness, constraints upon the attainment of principal and school effectiveness, and interventions parents made when they perceived a school was not meeting the standards that they deemed necessary.

Questionnaires based on the literature and on the data generated at a series of nominal group technique meetings with 73 principals were distributed to 132 junior primary and primary school principals, and 305 parents in the Northern Administrative Area of the Education Department of South Australia. In addition twenty seven superintendents of schools in South Australia received a similar questionnaire. Response rates were 64%, 62% and 77% respectively. Questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Thirty two parents, thirteen principals and eight superintendents were interviewed about constraints on school effectiveness, about strategies that could lead to improvement, and about stimuli for, and the nature of parental interventions at schools. Qualitative techniques were used to analyze and present verbal data.

Seven school effectiveness factors were identified: *Principal as Nexus, Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff, Student Centeredness, Facilities and Financial Management, Goal Emphasis, Parental Support* and *Academic Program Focus.* All constituent groups rated principals and schools from moderately to highly effective. The emphasis given to individual school effectiveness factors varied according to the constituent group responding.

For each constituent group the factor *Principal as Nexus* was the best predictor of overall principal effectiveness. The best predictors of overall school effectiveness were the factors *Student Centeredness* for parents, *Principal as Nexus* for principals and *Parental Support* for superintendents.

All groups perceived inadequate finances and their side effects and the lack of teamwork as constraints to the attainment of school effectiveness. Superintendents and principals recognized that superintendents had failed to support principals, particularly with professional development programs, and this had a negative impact on the effectiveness of schools.

Parental interventions occurred primarily when they were concerned about the happiness of their child. Based on interviews, half of the parents who had visited a school about a problem, had not had the problem resolved. Satisfactory resolution occurred when principals listened, negotiated strategies for resolution, and followed up on the problem.

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The cooperation and ideas of the parents and principals in the Northern Area of South Australia and the superintendents across the state who took time to respond to the questionnaires and engage in interviews were, of course, vital, as was the assistance from the Area Director, Denis Ralph.

Dr. E. Ratsoy oversaw the completion of this study while Dr. F. Peters, Dr. A. MacKay (Supervisory Committee members), Dr. E. Holdaway, Dr. D. Sawada and Dr. K. Leithwood (External Examiner) also made helpful suggestions at various stages of the research. Mrs. C. Prokrop contributed invaluable statistical support and was always prepared to listen and offer encouragement, while the support staff within the Department of Educational Administration were always cheerful in offering their assistance in other matters. Guidance and encouragement are particularly important to doctoral studies and the professors within the Department were always willing to engage in conversation and debate, offering their assistance, resources and friendship. Dr. M. Haughey was most generous in this regard and her efforts and the support of others were appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Schools play an important part in the lives of all of us. We working within them as students and clients, or as educators, make judgements about the processes and outputs of individual schools and school systems. Inherent in these judgements is the concept of effectiveness. However, the perception of what constitutes effectiveness and how to measure it, varies with individuals.

Schools exist within a turbulent social environment characterized by rapid change. In an effort to cope with the rate of change, many look to the school system to solve the problems of the wider society. Within this turbulent environment educators are aware that resources are scarce, as public service industries increasingly compete for their share of government budgets. Public scrutiny of education is increasing and the political milieu is becoming more complex. Within this context, educators frequently feel powerless to respond to the varied and often conflicting demands for changes in the schools. Nevertheless, efforts taken by the school system to adapt to meet these demands affects perceptions of school effectiveness held by the various constituents.

Within this dynamic social milieu, school principals and superintendents, as the administrators of individual schools and school systems, are concerned with the improvement of student learning and improvement of organizational performance. The pursuit of effectiveness is a focus of their interests; however, they may not be using the criteria other constituents use to judge effectiveness. Organizational ineffectiveness can often be more of a focus for some constituents. Therefore, calls from different constituencies for improvement could have their source in different stimuli from within individual schools or school systems.

In a review of research on school effectiveness, Purkey and Smith (1983) extracted nine organizational variables and four process variables that interact to produce a "culture resulting in a distinct climate composed of attitudes, behaviors, organizational structure, and so on, that is influential in determining the school's effectiveness" (p. 450). None of the variables acknowledge external environmental constituencies outside of the professional educational domain.

School effectiveness research has also identified the critical leadership role played by the principal. Yet, as Morris et al. (1984) point out, the principal's role in managing the boundary of the school, while at the same time balancing the expectations of constituent groups of parents, staff and district administration, has seldom been the focus of research:

> There has been little research on the dynamics of the school-community relationship from a managerial perspective. Although the local school is now recognized as the key point of contact between the school system and its surrounding environment, evidence of important interaction between the principal and the local school clientele is in short supply. (p. 110)

Given that the principal is the key actor in managing the boundaries between the school and the parents and the central administration, and given that each individual makes judgements about effectiveness and what actions should occur within the school to improve effectiveness, comments by Payne (1987) are relevant:

> Parental influence may be part of a complex means by which the school system controls the work behavior of principals. In ensuring that principals are responsive to parental influence, the school system is, in effect using an indirect (and perhaps unrecognized) mechanism for control of principal work behavior. (p. 2)

Peters (1987) argued that organizational responsiveness is a key criterion for effectiveness, change and organizational survival. This presupposes organizational sensitivity to the environment and awareness of the interaction between the organization and its multiple constituents.

The extent of interaction between parents, a major constituent group of the schooling process, and individual schools is increasing. Parental involvement in decision-making processes within South Australia is increasing therefore their perception of what constitutes effectiveness and ineffectiveness in schools is important.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to investigate what criteria are used by individuals and constituent groups to judge the level of school effectiveness and ineffectiveness and what actions are taken when negative assessments resulted. More specifically, the researcher had the following intents for the study: (a) to investigate perceptions of the important criteria of effectiveness and ineffectiveness in primary schools in South Australia as held by parents, principals and superintendents; (b) to investigate and compare perceptions of the effectiveness of, and constraints upon the effectiveness of primary school principals and primary schools within South Australia; and, (c) to identify the interventions made by parents when they perceived the school was not meeting effectiveness standards they deemed necessary.

The foregoing purposes led to the formulation of the research problems and subproblems which are stated below.

Statement of the Problem and Subproblems

The central research problems for this study were:

> What criteria are used by parents, principals and superintendents to judge school effectiveness?
>
> What is the relationship between school effectiveness and principal effectiveness?
>
> What actions do parents take when they perceive that a school is not meeting the level of effectiveness they deem necessary?

To obtain information about these and related questions that had their source in the literature reviewed for the study, perceptions were sought from principals and parents residing in one administrative area in the state of South Australia and from superintendents in the state. The following research questions guided the study.

Research Questions

The research problems listed below are categorized by areas of exploration and subdivided according to constituent groups.

School Effectiveness

Parents

1. What criteria are reported by parents to be important for assessing the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of schools?
2. How do parents rate the effectiveness of schools on important criteria of effectiveness?
3. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of parents' global ratings of principal effectiveness?
4. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of parents' global ratings of school effectiveness?
5. What is the relationship between parents' global ratings of principal effectiveness and parents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

Principals

6. What criteria are reported by principals to be important for assessing the acceptable level of effectiveness and ineffectiveness of primary schools?
7. How do principals rate the effectiveness of schools on important criteria of effectiveness?
8. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of principals' global ratings of principal effectiveness?
9. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of principals' global ratings of school effectiveness?

10. What is the relationship between principals' global ratings of principal effectiveness and principals' global ratings of school effectiveness?

Superintendents

11. How do superintendents rate the effectiveness of schools on important criteria of effectiveness?
12. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of superintendent's global ratings of principal effectiveness?
13. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of superintendents' global ratings of school effectiveness?
14. What is the relationship between superintendents' global ratings of principal effectiveness and superintendents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

School Effectiveness: Constraints

15. What factors are seen by parents to constrain the attainment of maximum effectiveness in schools?
16. What factors are seen by principals to constrain the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness?
17. What factors are seen by principals to constrain the attainment of maximum school effectiveness?
18. What factors are seen by superintendents to constrain the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness?
19. What factors are seen by superintendents to constrain the attainment of maximum school effectiveness?

School Effectiveness: Strategies for Improvement

20. What strategies are proposed by parents for improving principal effectiveness and school effectiveness?

21. What strategies are proposed by principals for improving principal effectiveness and school effectiveness?
22. What strategies are proposed by superintendents for improving principal effectiveness and school effectiveness?

Parent Interventions

23. What aspects of the operation of a school prompt parental intervention at the school or district level?
24. How do principals and superintendents respond to parental interventions?

Significance of the Study for Research and Practice

From a theoretical perspective schools can be characterized as open systems and as such they exist within and interact with forces within the current turbulent environment. The present period of fiscal restraint in South Australia and the resultant competition for money within the government budget means that the outputs that schools produce are coming under increased observation. Coupled with this is the legislation by the South Australian government to increase the degree of parental involvement in the operational decision-making processes of schools. Payne (1988), reporting on his research, indicated that parental

> influence can be viewed as a control mechanism forming part of the web of mechanisms which the district uses to control schools through the behavior of principals. It is part of the district control system because the system fosters the susceptibility of principals to parental influence in a number of ways. (p. 15)

Current moves to enhance parental participation in the decision-making processes in schools within South Australian could give added significance to his findings.

In May 1985 the government of South Australia declared that 1986 would be the year of "Parents and Students in Schools" (P.A.S.S.). This initiative fostered the beginning of a series of policy statements focussing on parental involvement in education. The latest policy initiative in this area was announced through *The Advertiser*, a daily newspaper distributed across South Australia, on the 5th of February 1988. Simply stated, the aim of the announced policy was to encourage parents to become involved with schools and secondly, to participate in making decisions within them. The policy required school principals "to establish structures, plans and processes in all schools which enable parent participation in decision making about educational aims, programs, and policies in the school." The guidelines indicated that "schools will need to detail the processes they will use to develop parent participation showing appropriate structures, actions, and time-lines. The plans should be in place and the implementation process started by the end of 1988/9 school year."

The government, in accordance with its electoral policy, made a decision about the nature of the degree of control of education by the professionals. Parents can now participate in the decision-making processes of the school and hence cease to be merely a resource for the school, to be consulted but with no implied right to share in decision making. Cullingford (1985) wrote that

> those who argue for the inclusion of parents in the school, and for some influence from the local community to be brought to bear, are arguing about the question of control: whether parents should have a strong say in the nature of the curriculum and the running of the school or whether the schools should be so clearly autonomous that parents should be seen as part of their resources, a part of the larger sphere of influence. (p. 1)

Parent participants will come to the decision-making process with some prior perceptions of their requirements and expectations of schools. Tacit judgements about the school will be made by each individual, against a personal mental framework of effectiveness. How well is the school carrying out the tasks and processes, and achieving outcomes according to the context of the individual or group concerned? The schools will become more open to the influence of multiple constituencies. From an open systems perspective it can be seen that the boundary between the organization and the environment is becoming less defined. A more permeable boundary between the school and its environment provides a means for educational and other operational processes associated with the core technology of the school to come under increased scrutiny. The increased involvement of non-professionals in the operation of schools means that the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of individual schools, and the school system in general, is of increasing concern to more people. Coupled with this is society's increasing questioning of the opinions or knowledge of professionals. Absolute endorsement by lay-people given to the actions of professional persons is no longer assumed and decisions made on the basis of professional knowledge or expertise are increasingly being questioned. There appears to be a general desire to be informed and involved in decision making within those areas where the individual has a personal stake and there seems to be a generally held expectation that lay-opinion should be valued by professionals.

As a result, a variety of constituencies are defining the criteria to judge school effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Also, non-professional constituents are being given more power to intervene. Simpkins (1979, p. 1) indicated the standing of leaders "rests on the way they are seen to live up to multiple idealizations of the leadership role." Successful principal management of multiple constituent perspectives of school effectiveness is becoming more critical. Furthermore, "where a leader must meet various expectations in order to secure a good credit rating as a leader, the vulnerability of his standing may increase with the number of expectations" (Simpkins, 1979, p. 6). Successful management by principals of the multiple perspectives of school effectiveness held by the constituents is becoming more critical.

This research therefore investigated school effectiveness and ineffectiveness as perceived by constituents within the school's multifaceted environment. The criteria associated with effectiveness and ineffectiveness are not necessarily on opposite ends of a continuum but may relate to each other much like the motivator and hygiene factors described by Herzberg (1966). The most critical aspects of effectiveness and ineffectiveness, as reported by the critical constituents for South Australia's primary schools, were therefore obtained. It was anticipated that the analysis of these criteria would give an indication of the degree of consensus about goals for schooling and of the importance given to the processes and products of schooling by the various constituents.

A somewhat novel approach taken in the present study was researching those factors that the constituents considered important in judging ineffectiveness. As Cameron (1984, p. 243) indicated, this is an area of concern for practicing administrators.

This study builds on previous work by Payne (1987), who looked at the various control measures used by parents and superintendents and the resultant influence on principal's work behavior. His data were gathered from professional educators and focussed upon their perceptions of parental influence. The propositions he developed ignored the opinions of parents and parent groups operating within the school environment, although these opinions were suggested by him as a valid area to research.

By building upon prior research in this way, this study and its outcomes were expected to contribute to knowledge development in the areas of school effectiveness and ineffectiveness, principal boundary-spanning activities, and the role of parental influence in controlling principal and superintendent work behavior. Knowledge of this kind should assist principals as they implement the government policy on parental involvement in school decision making. Likewise, knowledge about intervention strategies used by parents has the potential to inform educational administrators so that resolution of difficulties may occur at the lowest level possible within the district organization.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to assist the reader.

Constituents used in the sense defined by Seashore (1983, p. 55). These "are persons acting in their own interests or as representatives of others and having some form of interdependency with the focal organization of study," in this case primary schools.

Intervention is to come between by way of hindrance or modification, or to compel or prevent an action, or to maintain or alter a condition.

School effectiveness: Cameron and Whetton (1983) indicated that all general theories of organizations have built into them implied criteria for measuring effectiveness and that "definitions of organizational effectiveness that appear in the literature are historical recordings, not prescriptions" (p. 263). Definitions and usage have been diverse. Consensus of usage would mean prior agreement about a theory of organizations. They argue that such consensus is highly unlikely. Steers (1977) suggested that effectiveness can be best examined by "jointly considering three related concepts: (1) the notion of goal optimization; (2) a systems perspective; and (3) an emphasis on human behavior in organizational settings" (p. 4). An expanded view which embodies all of these conceptions is reflected in Georgopolous and Tannenbaum's (1957) early definition: organizational effectiveness is "the extent to which any organization as a social system, given certain resources and means, fulfils its objectives without incapacitating its means and resources and without placing undue strain upon its members" (pp. 536-537). Hoy and Fergusson (1985, p. 121) recommended this multidimensional view in their theoretical framework for organizational effectiveness of schools, and for the purposes of this research Georgopolous and Tannenbaum's definition was adopted.

Delimitations

1. As Cameron and Whetton (1983, p. 267) explained, the purposeful study of school effectiveness requires the selection of criteria for investigation. The study was therefore confined to examination of those criteria of school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness which were identified either within the literature or revealed during the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) meetings as being the most important.

2. In accordance with Cameron's (1986) model this study is delimited specifically in terms of his seven questions as indicated below.

Guideline	Circumspection
(a) From whose perspective is effectiveness judged?	The perceptions of principals, parents and superintendents were sought.
(b) On what domains of activity is the judgement focussed?	Whole school and principal activity were used. The school sector was further examined in terms of educational program, student factors, staff factors, communication-community factors, financial management factors, physical facility factors and management factors.
(c) What is the level of analysis used?	Analysis was based on the school level.
(d) What is the purpose of the assessment?	The investigation planned to identify distinct areas of effectiveness and ineffectiveness as well as a global assessment of school and principal effectiveness.
(e) What time frame is employed?	Short term (e.g., as student achievement, satisfaction, morale, staff commitment, morale) and medium term (e.g., keeping up to date with new technology, maintaining support of parent bodies). Long term effectiveness and ineffectiveness were not considered.
(f) What type of data is sought?	Perceptions of effectiveness and ineffectiveness were gained from questionnaire responses and interviews.
(g) What is the referent against which effectiveness is judged?	Effectiveness and ineffectiveness were judged by respondent's subjective perceptual assessments. No standards were imposed by the researcher.

3. Final questionnaire data collection is restricted to constituents of primary schools within one administrative area of the Education Department of South Australia. However, readers may choose from among the findings those ideas which have particular relevance for their own setting, but any such inferences must be drawn while exercising cautions associated with research of this type.

4. Final interviews were conducted with a sample from within each constituent group. The selection of interviewees depended upon volunteers from within the range of constituent groups represented. The final interviews provide informative in-depth data but this cannot be generalized beyond the constituents concerned.

Limitations and Assumptions

1. The response rates of 62% for parents, 64% for principals and 77% for superintendents meant that, in the absence of being able to check, the validity of the findings is limited by the assumption that the perceptions of the non-respondents were similar to those of the respondents. However, the high response rates lessened this concern.

2. The substantial reliance upon the questionnaire instrument limits the number of factors that can be explored and the types of perceptions that can be expressed.

3. In the design of the study the following assumptions were made:

(a) Principals, teachers, superintendents and parents were aware of and could judge the criteria and could rate the overall and individual criterion of effectiveness and ineffectiveness of schools with which they were associated.

(b) The questionnaire and semi-structured interview are an adequate means of gathering data related to the problems being investigated, and that, generally respondents interpreted the questions uniformly and in a sense intended by the researcher.

(c) The techniques used to analyze the data accurately reflected the responses obtained.

Research Context

State and Federal Responsibilities in Education

Under the federal system of government in Australia, the six states and the Northern Territory are responsible for providing educational services for their own residents. The Commonwealth Government is responsible for education in the Australian Capital Territories and a few small external territories. The Australian Constitution, however, empowers the Commonwealth Government to make special purpose grants to the states for education.

The Commonwealth Government pays virtually all of the entire cost of universities, colleges of advanced education and a number of other higher education institutions. It also pays almost a third of the cost of technical and further education. The states pay the larger proportion.

The Commonwealth Government's aim in supplementing the State Government contributions to schools and technical colleges (and private funds for non-government schools) is to ensure that available resources are used effectively. These developments have increased substantially the Commonwealth Government's direct financial commitment to education. However, each State retains the responsibility for administering education services and provide from their own resources, the major proportion of the finance needed to maintain their primary, secondary and technical educational systems.

Administration of Education in South Australia

In South Australia as in each state, there is a Minister of Education who is responsible to the State Parliament for educational policy making. Administrative duties are carried out by the Education Department headed by the Director General of Education. Technical and further education are administered by a separate Director General. Universities and the colleges of advanced education are self-governing and were established under Acts of the State Parliament.

As well as the schools administered by the State departments of Education, there are many non-government schools. These are mainly independent and rely on their own resources but they have in recent years received increasing financial support from State and Commonwealth Governments. Most of these schools are conducted by religious denominations, and in particular the Catholic Church and some provide boarding facilities. In 1986 within South Australia, approximately 193,000 students attended 823 government schools and approximately 50,000 students attended 174 non government schools.

Education is compulsory in South Australia for students from 6 to 15 years of age, but most students start school on or near their fifth birthday. Tuition fees are not charged in government schools, although approximately $45 per primary student and $55 per secondary student is levied per annum for the hire of textbooks, materials and other school equipment used by the students. The cost of secondary textbooks is subsidized by the government. Means tested subsidies are available for parents to defray these costs.

The Education Department of South Australia

The Director General of Education is the head of the department and appointed on a five-year contract. Under the Education Act, reframed in 1972, the Director General's responsibility for the curriculum of the state schools was reinforced. South Australia is the only state where the permanent head of the department and not the Minister of Education, has sole control of curriculum. The Education Act, Part vii, Section 82 states:

> The Director General of Education shall be responsible for the curriculum in accordance with which instruction is provided in government schools.

The Education Act, Part VII, Section 83 allows the Minister to establish a school council for any government school or schools. All schools have such a council and the councils have a role in the curriculum process. Regulation 206 states:

> The role of the School Council (as it relates to curriculum) shall be:
>
> > to advise the head teacher as necessary on the correlation between the work of the school and the educational needs of the district,
> >
> > to consider in broad outline the general educational policy within the school of which the head teacher shall keep the School Council continuously informed, and
> >
> > to advise him of the considered view of the local community regarding educational developments within the school.

Regulation 121 of the Education Act makes principals responsible to the Director General of Education for the management, organization and administration of the school and the welfare and development of its pupils.

Parental Participation

In February 1988, the government in accordance with its electoral policy made a decision about parental participation in the decision-making processes of schools. The Minister of Education announced that "The Education Department is to establish structures, plans and processes in all schools which enable parent participation in decision making about educational aims, programs and policies in schools" (*The Advertiser*, 5th February, 1988, p. 3). Parents can now participate in the decision-making processes and have ceased to be merely a resource for the school, to be consulted, but with no right to share in the decision making.

Decentralization of Administration

The Northern Area of the Education Department is the largest administrative unit of the five areas into which the State of South Australia is divided. The state is approximately 984,614 km square and represents 12.8 % of Australia's land surface. Adelaide is the capital city and has a population of approximately 1,000,000 people. The Northern Area comprises the northern sector of the Adelaide metropolitan area and adjacent country areas and has a population in excess of 350,000. The Area Directorate, administered by a Director of Education, has 175 schools with 49,426 students. Of these 30 Junior Primary and 102 Primary schools contain students in the R-7 grade range and the target population for the research. The Education Department has 7,447 staff employed in the Northern Area, some of whom are part-time. In full-time equivalents there are 4,237 teachers, 732 ancillary staff members and 118 Government Management and Employment Act employees. There are also 1,232 temporary relieving teachers, 97 hourly paid instructors, 234 contract cleaners and 164 bus drivers. The Area Office is located in the Elizabeth city center, from where all finance, personnel, facilities, curriculum and support services are managed. The Area's resource center and curriculum consultants are located at the Para Hills Professional Centre.

The Director of the Northern Area has three Assistant Directors for personnel, administration finance and facilities, and curriculum and student services. Five superintendents, who report to the Director, each work with groups of schools across the area.

The population of the Northern Area is relatively static but most schools in the area (over 70% in 1988) are experiencing declining or static enrollments. This is a state-wide phenomenon reflecting the maturing and/or the decline of populations in longer established urban areas. However, the Area has potential for very significant growth during the next 15 years. This growth will occur in two major expansions of existing urban areas, the Salisbury-Gawler corridor and the Golden Grove development. It is estimated that these will add 105,000 people to the existing population by the year 2001.

Organization of the Thesis

This chapter has provided an introduction to the study. Pertinent theoretical and research literature are examined in the next chapter. This literature plus the opinions of practicing principals within the Northern Area of the Education Department of South Australia were used to focus the development of a questionnaire. Chapter 3 details the research methodological procedures used to study principal effectiveness and school effectiveness; the constraints inhibiting the maximum attainment of both principal effectiveness and school effectiveness; the strategies suggested by parents, principals and superintendents for overcoming these constraints; and the interventions parents make when they perceive the school does not meet the effectiveness criteria they deem necessary. Chapter 4 reports pertinent components associated with school effectiveness and identifies the underlying school-effectiveness factors. The following three chapters (Chapters five through seven) report respectively parent, principal and superintendent assessment of both principal and school effectiveness and the criteria most likely to be used by each group in predicting both principal and school effectiveness. Chapter 8 examines the constraints inhibiting the attainment of maximum principal and school effectiveness as identified by parents, principals and superintendents. Chapter 9 reports the strategies suggested by parents, principals and superintendents for overcoming the inhibitors to the attainment of maximum principal and school effectiveness while Chapter 10 concludes the presentation of data with a discussion of the interventions made by parents when they deem a school or school principal is not meeting their required effectiveness criteria. The final chapter summarizes the study, draws conclusions and develops some recommendations for further research. The bibliography lists the works consulted while the appendices give overall tables for results reported in earlier chapters, and provide copies of the instrumentation and correspondence involved in the data collection.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF PERTINENT LITERATURE

This selective review of pertinent literature is presented in order to provide background knowledge for the study, justify the selection of the research problems, and identify inadequacies in the existing knowledge base. This literature review addresses the writings on organizational effectiveness and the resultant literature that has developed on school effectiveness, organizational climate and its links with the developing literature on culture, and the area of parental involvement in schools.

Organizational Effectiveness: The Construct and Implications for School Administrators

Introduction

The number of organizations with which individuals come in contact in their daily lives have increased during this century. Their influence is pervasive and "their presence affects-some would insist that the proper term is *infects* --virtually every sector of contempory social life" (Scott, 1987, p. 1). Coupled with this pervasiveness is the infinite variety of purpose for their existence and the varying structures and processes that they use to achieve these purposes. However underlying each of these structures is some mental conception of what constitutes effectiveness for the organization (Cameron and Whetten, 1983, p. 263). Cameron and Whetten (1983) further argued that the definitions of organizational effectiveness that appear in the literature are "historical recordings, not prescriptions." Consequently the definitions used have been diverse.

This section of the review of pertinent literature begins with an examination of some of the multi-dimensional perspectives to organizational effectiveness and explores the utility of the concept of organizational ineffectiveness. The literature on school effectiveness is then summarized. An analysis of the connection between the school effectiveness literature and the literature on school change processes is given and provides concomitant implications for the role of the principal.

Historical Overview of Organizational Effectiveness

Early Concerns

The importance of assessing the overall performance of organizations was recognized in the literature early in the twentieth century. Thus, as indicated by Spray (1976, p. 1) "Barnard (1937) and Weber, (1947) and members of the 'classical school' of organizational theorists, (Fayol, 1949; Gulick, 1937; Taylor, 1911; and Urwick, 1943)" all placed an emphasis on the determinants of organizational efficiency or organizational effectiveness. These theorists were concerned with developing general theories of organization, that if adhered to, would produce maximum organizational efficiency. Focus moved from efficiency and effectiveness with the development of research approaches within the social sciences. Spray (1976, p. 1) acknowledged this when he stated:

> Development of empirical methods in the social sciences, combined with a recognition of the increasingly pervasive influence of formal organizations, resulted in a proliferation of approaches to the study of organizational effectiveness. Consequently, theoretical pluralism is one of the defining characteristics of the extant literature dealing with organizational performance.

Dubin (1976) argued that the approach utilized in the study of organizational effectiveness is determined by taking either an internal or external view of the organization. The inside of the organization perspective is the approach of managers and can lead to a "return on investment" analysis. If the view is external to the organization then the organization is evaluated for its return to society. The effectiveness of the organization using the latter perspective is therefore likely to be judged by some form of cost-benefit analysis.

Evan (1976, p.18) argued that as the focus of theoretical attention shifts from the "*internal* to *external* organizational variables there is greater likelihood that the researcher will include organizational effectiveness as a major variable." The work of Lawrence and

Lorsch (1967), and Negandi and Reimann (1973, 1972) who were concerned with the relationships between organizational structure and environment, was cited by Evan (1976) to illustrate this point.

Organizational Effectiveness: Multi-Dimensional Perspectives

The application of a set of universalistic criteria for the analysis of the effectiveness of an organization has been unsuccessful because "organizational effectiveness is closely associated with conceptualizations of organizations. Variety in conceptualizations of organizations leads to variety in models of organizational effectiveness" (Cameron & Whetten, 1983 a, p. 4). There has been a change in the development of conceptualizations of organizations with a progression through the early machine metaphors (Taylor, 1911), purposeful cooperatives (Barnard, 1938), classical bureaucracies (Weber 1947), natural systems (Gouldner, 1959), social units deliberately constructed to seek specific goals (Etzioni, 1964), open systems (Buckley, 1967), the notion of biological living systems (von Bertalanffy, 1968), organizations as brains (Morgan, 1986), and organizations as psychic prisons (Morgan 1986). These changing conceptualizations acknowledge the complexity and variety within and between organizations.

Cameron and Whetten (1983 a, p.6) cite Daft and Wiginton (1979) who argued that "no single symbol, model, or metaphor can capture the complexity of organizations, so a variety of different ones are required." Further, Cameron and Whetten (1983 a, p. 5) argued that "a clear conception of organizations is not needed to understand effectiveness and it is even undesirable (Daft & Wiginton, 1979; Morgan, 1980; Weick, 1977)." This is supported by Hoy and Ferguson (1985, p. 118) who argued that "scholars now generally agree that effectiveness is a multidimensional rather than a unidimensional construct." This is so because no conceptualization has highlighted all of the releveant phenomena. Variety of conceptualizations of organizations and hence organizational effectiveness serves a useful purpose. Davis (1971), cited by Cameron (1894, p. 237) pointed out that what is interesting about organizations can only be uncovered by contradicting commonly held propositions while Rothenburg (1979) also cited by Cameron (1984) showed that "holding contradictory thoughts simultaneously in the mind is the most productive means for scholarly progress" (p. 237). However, irrespective of the conceptualization of an organization held, there is an inbuilt meaning for what is encompassed within the concept of organizational effectiveness. Individuals regularly engage in personal evaluations of organizational effectiveness and as indicated by Cameron and Whetton (1983) "when direct evidence of success is not available [e.g., productivity or output], almost any secondary, but visible, criteria are selected as the basis for judgements [e.g., furnishings of the buildings, or the appearance of organizational members]" (p. 2). Organizational effectiveness is a construct existing within the minds of people and therefore the relative importance of various criteria is subject to infinite variety.

Multiple Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness

Campbell (1977, p. 19-21) stated that the work of Ghorpade (1971) led to two well known points of view about organizational effectiveness, the *goal centered* and the *natural systems* view. The goal centered view makes explicit that the organization is controlled by rational decision makers who have a set of goals that they wish to pursue. The natural systems view makes the assumption that the organization is so fluid and complex that it is not possible to identify a finite set of organizational goals. Campbell then cited work done by Campbell and others (1974) in analyzing the empirical literature to compile a list of the 30 criterion measures of organizational effectiveness. These measures were from a variety of perspectives using a diversity of units for analysis.

Empirical Attempts at Criterion Organization

Campbell (1977, p. 41-43) cited work by Mahoney and Wietzel (1969) at the University of Minnesota Industrial Relations Center, that produced 24 effectiveness factors from among the correlations of 114 items; and also the work by Seashore and Yuchtman

(1967) in a Michigan study of archival sales and personnel data of 75 insurance agencies. This study produced 10 effectiveness measures. This was an attempt to correlate factors associated with the goals approach to organizational effectiveness.

Ratsoy (1983, p.2) commenting on the alternative natural systems view wrote:

> The natural systems view, which in the writings of Yuchtman and Seashore (1967) appears as the system resource approach, defines effectiveness in terms of the ability of the organization to maintain internal consistency, to develop judicious resource distribution over a variety of coping mechanisms, and to exploit its environments in the acquisition of scarce resources.

Therefore the perspective being utilized affects the perceptions of what is required to make an organization effective and what is measured to gauge organizational effectiveness.

Goal Model

A traditional view of organizational effectiveness has been a functional one. The organization is successful to the extent that it reaches its goals. If an organization can clearly specify the goals it is pursuing then it has a measure against which to assess its effectiveness. Similarly, if a superior can clearly specify and accurately state the outcomes of an individual's work then the superior has a concrete way of measuring the worker's effectiveness. If however, the outputs are ambiguous, or have been produced cooperatively with others, then it is difficult to assess both the quantity and quality of the outputs of each individual worker.

A major problem with the goals approach is the assumption that the stated goals of the organization are congruent with those it is actually pursuing. Many of the operational goals of an organization are frequently not articulated. Given that operational goals must be understood if the effectiveness of the organization is to be realistically measured, this is an impediment in the goals approach. Hoy and Ferguson (1985) outlined five strong criticisms of the goal model.

(1) Organizations typically have multiple goals, many of which are inconsistent, incompatible, and overlooked.
(2) Too often the focus is on an administrator's goals rather than those set by such other constituencies as subordinates, clients, or the public.

(3) Goals often change as contextural constraints and behavior vary, but goals in the model for evaluation tend to remain static.
(4) Since official goals are often not the operative goals, analysis of their operation is complex, difficult, and sometimes misdirected.
(5) Finally, some scholars argue that organizational goals simply do not guide behavior; in this sense, goals are often ex post facto statements that justify existing behavior (p. 119).

In an effort to acknowledge the reality of the organization and the processes that apply within them some analysts utilized a process model for making judgements about effectiveness.

A Process Model

Steers (1977) promoted a process model for the analysis of organizational effectiveness. He defined organizational effectiveness as "the organization's capacity to acquire and utilize scarce and valued resources as expeditiously as possible in the pursuit of its operative and operational goals" (p. 5). The model proposed by Steers judges organizational effectiveness by jointly considering (1) the notion of goal optimization; (2) a systems perspective; and (3) an emphasis on human behavior in organizational settings.

Underlying Theory and Assumptions of This Model

Steers argued that one advantage of viewing organizations from a process perspective is that it focuses attention on the subsidiary components of the organization. The components of an organization, originally described by Katz and Kahn (1966), are five subsystems: productive, supportive, maintenance, adaptive and managerial. The productive system is concerned with the major functions of the work of the organization. The supportive subsystem secures the needed inputs and distributes the outputs of the system. The maintenance subsystem is occupied with protecting the organizations structural integrity and basic character while the adaptive subsystem concentrates upon organizational survival and adaption in the changing environment. The managerial subsystem is involved with controlling and integrating other subsystems so that maximum effort can be directed towards desired ends.

Within this model the organization is regarded as a goal seeking system that has resource acquisition, efficiency, production/output, rational coordination, organizational renewal and adaption, conformity, and constituency satisfaction requirements. Given these complexities and the diversity of organizations, a contingency approach to organizational analysis is required. The framework for such an analysis can be seen in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Factors Contributing to Organizational Effectiveness

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Source: Steers, 1977, p. 8

It can be seen that Steers (1977) categorized the factors which impact upon organizational effectiveness into four domains, and he argued that these aspects are obviously interrelated and must be considered when assessing the effectiveness of an organization.

Organizational Effectiveness: Measurement of the Ability to Adapt

Steers attempted to build a descriptive prospectus of organizational effectiveness factors, but he gave little attention to the external environment and internal adaptive processes used by the organization to cope with changes in that environment. Dessler (1986, p. 80) however focussed on these change processes and defined organizational effectiveness as "the firm's ability to survive and effectively bargain with and adapt to crucial interest groups and create acceptable outcomes and actions." This approach was in-line with that taken by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) who argued that to survive and prosper an organization can react to the environment defensively, aggressively or both. If the organization was defensive it could engage in change and development activities that focussed on internal changes so that it had better "fits" with environmental demands. In an aggressive mode the organization could manage environmental demands by *avoiding influence, altering dependencies, negotiating with the environment,* or *legislatively creating a new environment* (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978, p. 257). Dessler (1986) favored the more defensive reactive posture for organizations because of the continual environmental support that an organization needs for its survival.

A Taxonomy of Organizational Effectiveness Indicators

Ratsoy (1983, p. 3) used the above heading when introducing his "frying pan" model of organizational effectiveness. He does not define effectiveness but discusses other labels used by writers in the literature which he believes are synonymous with the concept. The model shown in Figure 2 could apply to any organization if the term "students" was removed from the inputs/outputs variable and if "of instruction" was removed from the technology variable.

Underlying Theory and Assumptions of This Model

All variables in the model are interactive in a systems manner. The actions internal to the organization are a function of external actions and vice versa, with a cumulative effect upon the goals of the organization. The model takes a macro rather than a micro approach to organizational effectiveness and no identification of the tools or approaches to measuring organizational effectiveness was attempted.

Figure 2. Taxonomy of Organizational Effectiveness Variables.

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Source: Ratsoy, 1983, p. 4

Critique of the Model

The model is a collation of the research to that date and gives recognition to the interplay between the environment and the organization with the acknowledgement of the necessity of looking at inter-organizational linkages and boundary spanning mechanisms. The article suggested that a goals approach or technology perspective be undertaken if the resources are not available for a "full blown" organizational effectiveness approach but Ratsoy (1983, p. 5) stated that "if the model is to be useful, the principal of parsimony should be a guide in selecting effectiveness variables for inclusion. No model can be all-inclusive."

The advantage of this model for assessing educational institutions is its similarity to two of the best known program evaluation models--Stufflebeam's "CIPP", and Stake's "antecedents, transactions and outcomes" model. These are well known to most educational administrators and acceptance of the effectiveness research using the Ratsoy model may be heightened because of this.

Effectiveness in Organized Anarchies

Four major approaches to assessing organizational effectiveness are detailed by Cameron (1980). These are;

(1) effectiveness defined in terms of how well an organization accomplishes its goals,

(2) effectiveness judged on the extent to which an organization acquires its needed resources - a system resource approach,

(3) effectiveness measures that focus on the internal processes and operations of the organization (Effectiveness in these organizations is judged by an absence of internal strain, members of the organization are highly integrated into the system, internal functioning is smooth and there is an atmosphere of trust and benevolence towards individuals), and

(4) effectiveness as a strategic constituencies approach or the participant satisfaction model.

Cameron (1980, p. 70) after discussing these four major approaches to the assessment of organizational effectiveness states that "none of these approaches to evaluating effectiveness is appropriate for the class of organization frequently referred to as organizational anarchy." The analysis of organized anarchies indicates why this is so. As indicated by Cameron (1980, pp. 70-71) organized anarchies are characterized by:

(1) generally ill defined, complex and contradictory goals;
(2) means-ends connections not clear;
(3) more than one technology or strategy producing the same output;
(4) little or no feedback from outputs to inputs, and vice versa;

(5) subunits that are not tightly connected, hence influences from the external environment are partitioned among them and all but a small subset of factors can be ignored;

(6) widely different criteria of success can be operating simultaneously within the various parts of the organization; and,

(7) an ambiguous connection between the organizational structure and the activities of the organization.

It can be argued that schools display many of the features of an organized anarchy and therefore it is appropriate to consider the six major questions proposed by Cameron (1980, p. 75) before beginning to assess effectiveness within them. These questions are given in Figure 3. This consideration can allow the generation of meaningful results for the organization and that can be utilized within the organization.

Figure 3. Six Critical Questions in Evaluating Organizational Effectiveness

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Source: Cameron, 1980, p. 75

Cameron (1980, p.80) proposed that "managers answer these questions consciously or unconsciously, as they respond to certain pressures, constituencies, and criteria, but not to others."

This managerial pursuit of effectiveness as a goal to be attained and their continual striving for the organization *becoming* effective rather than to *be* effective was highlighted by Zammuto (1982, p. 161). He defined effectiveness as "the ability of an organization to satisfy changing preferences of its [many and varied] constituencies over time (Zammuto, 1982, p. 82).

The manager, chief executive officer, or leader of an organization continually scans the organization for aspects that require attention. As such, when they focus their activities, the concept of ineffectiveness is frequently high on their perceptual grid.

Organizational Ineffectiveness

Managers and leaders of organizations are frequently concerned with evaluating the performance of their organization and effecting changes in the inefficient aspects of the organization while maintaining the effective components. Cameron (1984, p. 235) stated that the

> basic assumption is that it is easier, more accurate, more consensual, and more beneficial for individuals to identify ineffectiveness (problems or faults) than it is to identify criteria of effectiveness(competencies). Under this approach, effectiveness is viewed as a continuum ranging from ineffectiveness to high effectiveness. An organization is defined as having achieved effectiveness when it is free from ineffectiveness.

Cameron argued that because the construct space of effectiveness is unclear it is to be expected that consensual criteria for measuring effectiveness have not been produced. This reinforced the work of Zammuto (1982) who indicated that preferences for desired outcomes are not stable within an organization. Hence perceptual agreement about desired measures for organizational effectiveness are also not stable. Because of this managers tend not to focus their activities on aspects of the organization that appear to be running smoothly. As Cameron stated "the luxury of pursuing a more excellent way is largely beyond the scope of managerial concerns" (p. 243). For most managers then the concept of ineffectiveness has more utility, that is something is either effective or not.

In Figure 4 Cameron highlights the focus of research efforts on the ineffective-highly effective continuum by drawing an analogy with the health field and the concern of managers within organizations and researchers of organizational effectiveness. The figure illustrates that the research efforts of the researchers is not of much practical use to the managers of organizations who are concerned with "qualitatively different phenomena" (Cameron, 1984, p. 243). Cameron (1984) continued by arguing that the construct space for ineffectiveness appears to be more narrow and more easily mapped. Whereas people "vary considerably in what they seek to achieve [i.e., their desired outcomes], they are very much alike in what they seek to avoid [i.e., failures] {see Baier, 1958; Watkins, 1963; Popper, 1966}" (Cameron, 1984, p.247). From this perspective it can be seen that research in the area of ineffectiveness would be beneficial to the practitioners.

Figure 4. A Comparison of Continua of Individual Health and Organizational Effectiveness

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Cameron, Kim and Whetton (1987, p. 224) draw attention to the concept of ineffectiveness as presented in much of the literature on decline. They state that "much of the literature on decline has focussed on the negative effects of shrinkage and has equated decline and ineffectiveness." This is not to be confused with the construct of ineffectiveness as defined above.

Organizational Effectiveness: Summary of the Construct

Much has been written on organizational effectiveness but there is no consensus on the approach or criteria to be used when judging it. Cameron and Whetton (1983) summarized this when they wrote that "no theories of organizational effectiveness per se are possible, the criteria for assessing the construct are both divergent and difficult to identify . . . (p. 20). Every conception of an organization has within it some a priori of the factors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. However these conceptions depend upon the perspective of the individual.

Van de Ven and Ferry (1980) found, when trying to identify common effectiveness criteria among constituencies in Wisconsin, and in some Texas child-care organizations, that individuals had difficulty in articulating effectiveness criteria "because users had not operationalized their value judgements in their own minds . . . [and] as might be expected, users found it impossible to formulate criteria they would use to measure intangible goals" (p. 46).

Given the wide variety of participants within organizations and the numerous constituencies that can attempt to set organizational effectiveness criteria, Scott (1987, p. 324-325) offerred three predictions, (1) the criteria offered by each group will be self interested ones, (2) each criterion will benefit some groups more than others but all will be stated to appear universalistic and objective, and (3) given multiple sets of actors pursuing their own interests and a situation of scarce resources, we would expect little commonality or convergence, and some conflicts in the criteria employed by the various parties to assess organizational effectiveness. This latter prediction is supported by the study conducted by Freidlander and Pickle (1968).

Research cited by Cameron (1984) indicates that it will be easier to generate consensus among constituent groups about the appropriate measure for the identification of ineffectiveness criteria. This could be an appropriate focus because by definition, the removal of factors causing ineffectiveness gives rise to a more effective organization.

The research on organizational effectiveness with a particular focus on schools has generated a body of literature and this can be broken into two major categories and these are discussed below.

Effective Schools

To understand the place of the effective schools research it is helpful to distinguish between: (1) the study of effective schools and, (2) research on school effects. The research on effective schools attempts to find differences between schools by identifying and investigating those perceived to be more effective than the norm. The school effects research

> follows the lead of such researchers as James Coleman and Christopher Jencks, and has established (1) that home background is the principal school-level predictor of school achievement and (2) that there is relatively little variance in average test scores among schools, after controlling for socioeconomic and aptitude differences. (Ralph and Fennessey, 1983, p. 689)

School effects research continues to investigate school and classroom variables that affect achievement, even though their impact is modest compared with that of the home environment.

As indicated by Ralph and Fennessey (1983, p.670) the term "effective schools" implies that all classrooms perform fairly well, rather than a few outstanding classrooms raising the overall average. However this is not so in the effective schools research literature as most measurement is based on the performance of selected grades in selected subject areas. Ralph and Fennessey (1983, p. 690) indicated that the effective schools reform movement rests on two empirical propositions: "(1) there are verifiable examples of exemplary schools that serve poor urban minority children, and (2) there are specific, concrete characteristics that determine the performance of these schools."

School Effectiveness-A Literature Summary

This summary discusses the research of the major contributors in North America and elsewhere.

North American Research

Clark, Lotto and McCarthy

According to Clark, Lotto and McCarthy (1980, p. 468) the research on effective schools can be summarized with three distinctly different types of data used for the basis of analysis: (1) case studies, (2) research studies, and (3) observations and generalizations about exceptional urban elementary schools obtained from individual researchers. Clark, Lotto and McCarthy (1980) analyzed the case study and research literature on more than 1200 urban elementary schools and then interviewed leading researchers and writers on urban education. Figure 5 shows a summary of their findings of the research generalizations supported by all of the substudies.

It can be seen that three of the clusters, leadership, teaching personnel, and curriculum instruction, are more directly related to school improvement and school success. Hence it could be argued that they are requirements for school improvement strategies and appropriate facets to be considered by educators when assessing school effectiveness.

Ronald Edmonds

Good and Brophy (1986, p. 582) stated that Edmonds, "prior to his death in 1983,. . . more than anyone, had been responsible for the communication of the belief that *schools* can and do make a difference." He (Edmonds) spent time dealing with (a) the investigation of pupil background characteristics, (b) the inclusiveness of school effectiveness (c) comparison of methods for examining school effectiveness (d) equity of evaluation measures and (e) the comparison of effective and ineffective schools (Edmonds 1983, cited in Good and Brophy [1986, p. 580]).

Purkey and Smith (1983, p. 429) cited Edmonds (1982), who, based on his own work and research by "Averch et al. (1972), Brophy and Good (1972), Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisenbaker (1979), Mayeske, Wisler, Beaton, Weinffeld, Cohen, Okada, Proshek, and Tabler (1972), and Weber (1971), "identified five characteristics of an effective school: (1) a principal who provides leadership and gives attention to the quality of instruction; (2) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; (3) an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (4) teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students will obtain at least minimum mastery of a subject; and (5) the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation. There is a correlation between these characteristics and the variable clusters of leadership, teaching personnel, and curriculum instruction used by Clark, Lotto and McCarthy (1980, p. 468).

Figure 5. Summary of Findings About Factors Associated with Exceptionality in Urban Elementary Schools

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Source: Clark, Lotto and McCarthy, 1980, p. 468

Purkey and Smith

Purkey and Smith (1983) in a comprehensive summary of the literature on school effectiveness grouped the studies into four categories--outlier studies, case studies, program evaluation studies and "other" studies-- and used the information derived from these studies to describe the components of an effective school using two groups of variables. The first group of organizational variables can be established by administrative means, while the second group of process variables is related to the culture of the school.

The nine organizational/structure variables identified by Purkey and Smith are:

1. Emphasis is placed on school site management with autonomy given to the school leadership.

2. Strong instructional leadership is provided by the principal or teachers.

3. Stability and continuity are valued and actions which decrease this are avoided, thus facilitating agreement and cohesion.

4. Curriculum articulation and coordination are used to achieve consensus on goals, develop a purposeful program of instruction, and provide adequate instructional time.

5. There is a school wide staff development program involving all staff and based on the expressed needs of the teachers but also closely related to the instructional program.

6. Parents are actively informed about the school goals and are supportive of them.

7. School-wide recognition of academic success is provided.

8. More time is devoted to academic subjects while time lost due to disruptions of the academic program is minimized.

9. Support and encouragement from the district central office is evident.

The process variables identified by Purkey and Smith relate to the culture of the school and the climate within that culture, and are:

1. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships are evident and this helps to break down interpersonal barriers, develop consensus and promote a sense of unity.

2. There is a strong communal sense. This feeling of being a member of a recognizable and supportative community, reduces alienation and increases commitment to school goals.

3. Clear goals and clearly defined purposes with agreement on priorities are evident.

4. Order and discipline are based on clear rules and are enforced fairly and this assists with the communication of the purpose of the school's task.

Purkey and Smith (1983) emphasized that the structure and process variables are interrelated and interdependent. The structural variables are an a priori condition within which the process variables can develop. In their view neither group of variables alone is sufficient to describe an effective school.

Peters and Waterman

Peters and Waterman (1982) in their book about America's best run companies, *In Search of Excellence* commented on the attributes that characterize excellent companies. These attributes have since been applied to schools and are:

1. Commitment--the collective staff agreed upon behaviors and outcomes are specific enough to control the behaviors of veteran members and acculture new members to the organization.

2. Expectations--good schools are staffed by confident teachers that expect others to perform to their level of quality. Students also know what they are expected to achieve and teachers are surprised by those who fail.

3. Action--good schools have a bias for action and a sense of opportunism. Experimentation is promoted and strengths are known.

4. Leadership--effective educational institutions promote primary work groups and talents in unexpected members. The designated leader creates the environment for experimentation and tolerance for failure so that leaders can emerge at all levels of the system.

5. Focus--effective schools pay close attention to the primary task in the classrooms. More class room time is allocated for academic learning and more of the class time is for engaged learning activities. Staff development activities focus on instructional skills and understandings.

6. Climate--good schools maintain an orderly and safe environment for staff and students. Good schools are good places to work and learn for all of the participants in the educative process.

7. Slack--good schools have a reasonable level of human resources and slack time. There is time for staff to participate in developmental activities and to incorporate new practices into their busy schedules. Experimentation is valued and there is tolerance for failure caused by experimentation.

Peters and Waterman, like Purkey and Smith, believe that the interaction between process and organizational factors leads to defined improvement. They argued that the organizational factors have received more attention in the past, but the process factors are arguably the most important.

Non-North American Research

Probably the best known work outside of North America is the British 1,500 Hours study by Rutter et al. (1979, p. 2) which stated that "clearly, there is considerable disagreement about the influence of schooling on children's development. At first sight, too, there appears to be a hopelessly confusing chaos of contradictory research findings. In fact, that is not so." They go on to demonstrate that individual schools do make a difference to pupils' behavior and attainment. Rutter et al. (1979) also suggested that there is a consistency of 'effectiveness' or 'ineffectiveness' over time within a school.

Goldstein (1980) criticized their results on methodological grounds, but the substance of their argument stands. This study collected more process data of better quality than other school effects studies. In discussing the findings Good and Brophy (1986, p. 580) stated "the data provided by Rutter et al. strongly suggest that school process has important effects on student outcome measures."

Summary of School Effectiveness Literature

The relationship between a principal's behavior and school effectiveness is tenuous. In fact, mutual causality appears to be characteristic, that is, no variable in a loop controls other variables without also being controlled by them (Good and Brophy, 1986). There is little agreement on what constitutes school effectiveness. Much of the research on effective schools relies on standardized testing of a few classes in the lower grade levels in urban elementary schools. Few would claim this is an adequate measure of effectiveness. "The current definition is a very special one that focuses on a single content area (basic skills) for a limited clientele (the urban poor)" (Firestone and Herriott, 1982, p. 53).

Robinson (1985) in a review of the literature on school effectiveness concluded that no single factor makes a school effective. Similarly, D'Amico (1982) compared the findings of Brookover and Lezotte, Edmonds, Rutter, and Phi Delta Kappa and found that similarities exist between these researchers, but it is not a perfect match. A concern in this research is that " authors seem to have done quite a bit of interpretation when translating their findings into conclusions" (p. 61). Purkey and Smith (1982) question the generalizability of school effectiveness research and warn against a "recipe model" application of the findings. Regardless of these shortcomings, most researchers on school effectiveness generally agree to the acceptance of the body of school effectiveness literature.

Irrespective of these warnings and the inexact definition of an effective school, the principal is most often charged with the responsibility of creating an effective school. However, Leithwood (1982) claimed that only a small amount is known about the program-specific behavior of effective principals and that "large critical components of effective behavior are still to be discovered" (p. 31). Good and Brophy (1986), while accepting that nearly all studies of effective schools support the importance of the principal indicate that "there is far less consensus, however, on the behaviors and practices that characterize leadership on a day to day basis" (p. 596). Dwyer et al. (1982) said that "there are no simple ways to understand the effects of principal behavior on schools" (p. 593).

Robinson (1985) concluded that there were similarities between schools reporting instructional effectiveness. One similarity was the principal's role as leader. He identified nine components common to effective schools which describe principal leadership. The principal, as leader, must ensure that the goals and objectives which will lead to effectiveness are established and implemented. Sergiovanni (1982, p. 331) proclaimed that it is the ability of the principal to achieve a goal through people, rather than self action, which creates an effective school.

The principal has an indirect role in achieving school effectiveness as defined by student outcomes. The principal's actions are seen to influence teacher behaviors, a facet of the classroom related factors, which in turn affect student outcomes. There are also factors specific to each individual school through which the principal can affect student outcomes. This situation is succinctly portrayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6. A Paradigm of the Principal's Role in Student Learning

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Source: Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982: 335

Purkey and Smith (1982) also recognized the principal's indirect role in school improvement. They described a "school culture model" which avoids top down attempts at improvement. The school culture model ". . . assumes that consensus among the staff of a school is more powerful than overt control without ignoring the need for leadership" (p. 68).

Firestone and Herriott (1982) and Robinson (1985) suggested that the effective school research is a key source of information in planning for school improvement. This is supported by a study conducted by Duke and Stiggins (1985), where strong support was found for the use of perceived school performance as an evaluation indicator for principals. Individual school performance improvement appears to be the key to success in district improvement efforts.

Edmonds (1982) noted that "the local school is the unit of analysis and the focus of intervention" (p. 10). Snyder (1983) reported that school improvement goals can only be realized if "each staff member sets performance targets for a given year that are directly connected to overall school and team improvement priorities" (p. 34).

Although school effectiveness could appear to present criteria for evaluating principals, Kroeze (1984) stressed the importance of context. Within the context of the school, the interrelationships between "1, environmental 2, context/principal characteristics 3, principal behavior [and] 4, educational outcomes" (p. 3) determine the extent to which a school is effective. The importance of context may be the primary reason for the number of different reports on the characteristics of effective schools.

Once goals have been established which reflect the context, success is possible. This was the conclusion of McCormick-Larkin and Kritek (1982) in a review of Milwaukee's project RISE. They credit some of the success of this school improvement project to the focus given to the role of principals in creating change. They noted that "the district administrators have given them the responsibility to design and implement individual programs and have held them accountable for results" (p. 21) and this was a valuable component in the production of the change.

There is a core of factors consistently articulated with school effectiveness. However, they cannot be used prescriptively and imposed by the district administration or by individual principals If real strides in school improvement are to be made, due recognition must also be given to the literature on the production of planned change.

School Effectiveness and Change

There is a growing literature on organizational theory and change processes in schools. As indicated by Reid, Hopkins and Holly (1987, p. 12):

> Several commentators [the Schmucks, 1974; Cuban, 1984; Fullan, 1985; Purkey and Smith, 1985; Hopkins, 1986a, etc.] have argued that because 'change is a process and not an event' schools need to improve - and make more effective - not only their 'change process capacity', but also their understanding of the dynamics of change.

Giving cognizance to the dynamics of change the research literature on change can be synthesized with the following points:

- the school is the focus of change ;
- the principal is the key facilitator;
- the development of classroom practice is really the development of teachers ;
- staff development must deal with issues seen as relevant by participants;
- professional development should be designed collaboratively and activities should be collegial;
- decision-making should be collaborative;
- strategies must be flexible, practical, open ended and relevant to the situation;
- support networks within and without the school are critical; and
- school staffs have the ability to solve most of their own problems, though they may not realize it.

These points were synthesized from the work of Bentzen (1974), Berman and McLaughlin (1978), Fullan (1982), Goodlad (1984), Harrison (1984, 1979), Saphier and King (1985), Sergiovanni (1984, 1979), and Withall and Wood (1979).

It can be seen that the focus of change is the individual school and this requires cooperative efforts of the staff within the school. Snyder (1988, p. 40) argued that the major focus of a principal's work is to mange the cooperative efforts of a staff to achieve an agreed vision She indicated that writers who focus on institutional successes cite "work culture as the distinguishing feature of excellent companies." From this she therefore argued that it is the principal's responsibility "to envision what a school can become and then to identify with others what tasks should be addressed each year" (p. 40).

Given the frequent mention of climate by earlier writers and now the emphasis on culture it is appropriate to briefly review these two concepts and their implication for both principal and school effectiveness

Organizational Climate

We will first look at the early definitions of organizational climate and the development of a changed meaning for the concept. School climate is now regarded by some as synonymous with the concept of culture. The concept of culture is then examined from an anthropological perspective and from within an organizational context. The linkage between climate and culture is explored. The utility of the concept of culture for educational administration is discussed and analyzed from the perspective of the principal acting as a cultural leader.

Climate - The Early Concept

The way a person performs in a particular educational organization is determined in part by individual characteristics and in part by the organizational setting. When one visits different settings there can be major differences in the *atmosphere* of the places. Synonyms for this are feel, tone, climate and milieu and they refer to the way the members of the organization experience the internal quality of the organization. Andrew Halpin (1966) noted:

> In one school the teachers and principal are zestful and exude confidence in what they are doing. They find pleasure in working with each other; this pleasure is transmitted to students . . . . In a second school the brooding discontentment of teachers is palpable; the principal tries to hide his incompetence and his lack of direction behind a cloak of authority . . . . And the psychological sickness of such a faculty spills over on the students who, in their own frustration, feed back to teachers a mood of despair. A third school is marked by neither joy nor despair, but by hollow ritual . . . in a strange way the show doesn't seem to be for "real." (p. 131)

Hoy and Miskel (1982) used the concept of climate to explain the differences between schools. They defined organizational climate as "the set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of people in it" (p. 185). They stated that climate is equivalent to considering the personality of a school.

In his doctoral dissertation, Batchler (1977) indicated that in the early work on climate, as Guion (1973, p.130) reported, there appeared to be confusion about "whether climate referred to an attribute of the organization or attributes of the employees." Downey, Hellriegel & Slocum (1975, p.149) claimed that "organizational climate has generally been defined as an individual's perception of his work environment . . . It is a summative variable intended to represent the individual's filtering, structuring, and description of the numerous stimuli impinging on him from the organization." Batchler (1977) then contrasted this with the definition of climate by Hellriegel and Slocum (1978, p. 256), who synthesized Beer (1971), Campbell (1970), Dachler (1973), and Schneider (1972) and defined organizational climate as "a set of attributes which can be perceived about a particular organization and/or its subsystems, and that may be induced from the way that organization and/or its subsystems deal with their members and environment" (p. 38).

Measurement of Organizational Climate

Work by Halpin and Croft in 1962, as part of a research contract for the United States Office of Education, led to the development of a sixty four item questionnaire called the *organizational climate description questionnaire* (OCDQ). It contained eight dimensions, four as characteristics of faculty behavior, and four as characteristics of principal behavior. Hindrance, intimacy, disengagement, and esprit were focussed on faculty behavior while production, aloofness, consideration and thrust had a focus on principal behavior. Through factor analysis they developed six basic school climate clusters ranging on a continuum from open to closed. The ends of the continuum were the virtual antithesis of each other.

Following work using Halpin and Croft's (1962) scales, controversy developed over the usefulness of the six discrete climates identified by them. Brown (cited in Hoy and Miskel 1982, p. 191), in a study with eighty one elementary schools in Minnesota, identified eight discrete climate types along the continuum, while Watkins (1968) found weaknesses with the middle climate types.

John Andrews (1965, p. 333) in a comprehensive validity study of the OCDQ concluded that

> the concepts "open" and "closed," applied by analogy from psychology, appear to have little meaning, except in terms of the description of the profiles they represent. In fact, the vagueness of the concept "organizational climate" and of the names of the six climate types is regarded as a detraction from the validity of the OCDQ.

He found that the sub-tests of the OCDQ provided reasonably accurate measures of important aspects of a principal's leadership in terms of interaction with the staff, but could not be used to extrapolate to the discrete climate profiles.

Climate - The Concept Now

As a result of Andrews validity study, the rate of the work with the OCDQ diminished. However recent work has been done by Schwartz and Davis (1981, p.103) who stated that climate is "a measure of whether people's expectations about what it should be like to work in an organization are being met." This represents a transition from the measurement of actual experience within the organization, the thrust of the sixties, to the measurement of expectation fulfillment.

Gordon (1985) who cites Schwartz and Davis, indicated that climate is equated with *attitude* surveys that measure satisfaction with various aspects of the job environment. He indicated that in his work with Hay Associates, they persistently collected the *perceptions* of individuals in the top four or five levels of the management about how their companies operate. This is an important difference because the measure is of company performance and not individual satisfaction with facets of the organization.

In this process the management are not asked about satisfaction or whether expectations are being met. Rather their perceptions of company functioning, reflect the value systems or culture of the company, as seen through the eyes of the management.

This represents a transition from climate measurement to the espoused measurement of culture. It is based upon the movement from the measurement of attitude and satisfaction indicators, compared with the measurement of perception. This begs the question; within the study of organizations, has organizational culture come to replace organizational climate as the significant variable? Are they equivalent or has climate been redefined?

Culture

Culture - An Anthropological Perspective

Sir Edward Burnett (1871), cited in Harris (1986), the founder of academic anthropology in the English-speaking world, and the author of the first anthropology textbook said that:

> Culture . . . taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. (p. 1)

However Harris (1986), a modern anthropologist, defined culture as "the learned, socially acquired traditions and life-styles of the members of a society, including their patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting (i.e., behaving)" (p. 6). Culture is therefore concerned with all aspects of a group's social behavior including their formal laws and technology.

Culture - An Organizational Perspective

Culture as a phenomenon has its roots in anthropology and Pinder and Bourgeois (1982) have cautioned organizational scholars from borrowing metaphors from other disciplines. Morgan (1983) responded to their caution by indicating that it is impossible to purge science of metaphors. He states that this approach is "profoundly conservative, encouraging an administrative science that turns its back on ideas and developments occurring in other fields, in order to become an introverted, self-sealed area of study" (p. 606). Smircich (1983, p. 341) in positing the use of metaphors for organizational analysis stated that

> the term organization is itself a metaphor referring to the experiences of collective coordination and orderliness. Meadows (1967: 82) has argued that organization theory is always rooted in the imagery of order and asserts that " the development of theories of organization is a history of the metaphor of orderliness."

Within discussing culture in an organizational context Schein (1985, p. 9) defined culture as

> a pattern of basic assumptions-invented, discovered, or developed by a group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration-that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Being slightly more colloquial, Deal and Kennedy (1982) cited in Kottkamp (1984, p.152), stated culture is the " informal understanding of the 'way we do things around here' or 'what keeps the herd moving roughly west.'"

However irrespective of the definition used, underlying the cultural perspective is the concept of a defined community and the importance of their shared values and understandings. Smircich (1983) indicated that culture fulfills several important functions: it conveys a sense of identity for organizational members, it facilitates the generation of commitment to something larger than oneself, it enhances social system stability, and it serves as a sense making device that can guide and shape behavior (p. 354). Bates (1987) shares these views when he describes corporate culture as a "system of beliefs, behaviors, myths and rituals fundamental to motivating organizational members and making the organization successful" (p. 80).

Culture according to Smirich (1983) "is strikingly similar to the notion of a paradigm as it is applied in scientific communities. Paradigms and culture both refer to world views, organized patterns of thought with accompanying understanding of what constitutes adequate knowledge and legitimate activity" (p. 349).

Culture - Some Critical Aspects

Culture is analogous to observed behavioral regularities in the group context. Behavior patterns come to be automatic as a result of feedback about appropriateness of current behavior and understandings of group norms. As such, an awareness of the way an individual perceives is important for an organizational analyst.

Perception

To date the idea of perception has resisted a conceptual definition. Johnson (1987) indicated that according to Shaver (1981, p. 83), there was broad consensus that perception "is the understanding of the world that you construct from data obtained through your senses." Johnson summarized the eight generalizations of Allport (1965). Three of them are important in the context of this study: (1) impressions are weighed unequally in perceptual aggregation; (2) perceptions are assembled over time; and (3) perceptions remain relatively steady over time (Johnson 1987, p. 208). Hence the culture of organizations is not easily changed, and some aspects of the organization are considered more important than others. This can vary with individuals.

Perception and Language

An idea in the highest sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a symbol.

One of the ways that individuals engage in sense making is by using symbols to convey meaning and understanding. It is through language that we perceive and it is through language that we make sense of our experiences. As Koch and Deetz (1981, p. 3) indicated "perception and knowing are linked in an interpretive process that is metaphorically structured, allowing us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another." This is important for administrators to understand because as Gronn (1984) indicated, the work of administrators is "talk." Hodgkinson (1978) agreed with this and two of his propositions reinforce the importance of language:

> Language is the basic administrative task; and
>
> Language cloaks power and *has* power. (p. 204)

Greenfield (1983, p. 298) also reinforced the importance of language when he stated "language is power. It literally makes reality appear and disappear. Those who control language control thought - - and thereby themselves and others." Hence by implication it can be seen that metaphors shape understanding and action, that is, the reinforcement and refining of culture.

Language as a cultural mechanism is pervasive and carries meaning for many generations. Such is the case with the concept of thesis and antithesis, the basis of Aristotlean logic. As Holdaway (1968, p. 18) noted, "several writers have pointed out that traditional dichotomies do not accurately represent the trends of modern social science research. But dichotomized thinking continues to exist." On reflecting back to the work of Halpin and Croft it may be that this type of thinking was responsible for the inherent weaknesses in their continuum of open-closed climate. Perhaps the accuracy of the OCDQ was inhibited by forcing the results on to a dichotomized continuum.

The influence of language continues long after the initial metaphor is created. We understand and make sense by reflection on events and actions. In doing this we use language that has been transmitted to us with its inner messages. Therefore language is one of the base building blocks of any culture and one of the ways of its transmission, interpretation and reinforcement. Use of symbols and language can occur at different conceptual levels within one cultural context. It can be part of the daily patterned behavior or the means of examining underlying myths and basic assumptions about the nature of reality for that culture.

Levels of Culture

Schein (1985) proposed that there are visible levels of culture and that they need to be carefully distinguished in order to avoid conceptual confusion. These levels are shown in Figure 7.

Schein (1985, p. 15-25) argued that the most visible level of culture is that of artifacts and creations. However insiders are not always aware of their own artifacts, so one cannot ask about them, even though they are readily observable to others. Nevertheless it is difficult to understand what the artifacts mean, how they interrelate and what deeper patterns they reflect. Schein (1985) indicated that if one wishes to achieve this level of understanding "one can attempt to analyze the central values that provide day-to-day operating principles by which the members of the culture guide their behavior" (p. 15). The values within a culture reflect someone's original value of what ought to be. The first time a unique problem is tackled, the initial solution is a reflection of that person's values. If the solution works and the group has a shared perception of that success the "value gradually starts a process of *cognitive transformation* into a belief and, ultimately an assumption" (p. 16).

Not all values undergo this transformation. Only those that are capable of physical and social validation and continue to work reliably to solve the group's problems will become transformed. The basic assumptions of a group are congruent with what Argyris and Schon (1980) identified as "theories-in-use." To change basic assumptions (called double loop learning by Argyris and Schon), is difficult because they are not confrontable or debatable. Therefore these basic assumptions are hard to locate and often deal with fundamental aspects of the culture. Schein concluded his argument by indicating that when they do emerge for the researcher, the cultural patterns are clarified and one has an understanding of what is really going on and why.

Figure 7. Levels of Culture and Their Interaction

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Scource: Schein, 1985, p.14

By using Schein's (1985) levels of culture it is possible to utilize the Smircich (1983) analysis of culture as a root metaphor or critical variable in organizational studies.

Organizational Culture from Five Perspectives

In the first two approaches indicated in Figure 8 (comparative management and corporate culture studies) culture is taken as an independent or dependent, internal or external, organizational variable. In the other three perspectives, culture is not a variable but a "root metaphor." When using culture as a variable in the analysis of organizations, it is comparable to considering organizations as organisms. This leads to systems theory type perspectives with the organization existing within the environment that contains the cultural context.

In 1979 Pondy and Mitroff suggested that the culture model replace the open systems perspective for the analysis of organizations. There is a growing trend in this direction but much of the research from the cultural perspective fails to acknowledge the conceptual basis of culture being used, as indicated in Figure 7.

However Smircich (1983, p. 347) indicated that use of the root metaphor method of analysis promotes the idea of "organizations as expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness." The latter three perspectives shown in Figure 8. can be linked to the three levels used by Schein (1985) and illustrated in Figure 7. Any research from within these three perspectives seeks to explore the phenomenon of organization as the subjective lived experience of those within them. This seems to fit better with the concepts of organizations as social constructs. Hence the idea of using culture as the root metaphor, focusing on collective meaning making processes, has greater intrinsic appeal.

Culture can be carried by an individual but it must be enacted in a group. A group has no mind, so the collective understandings are part of the people who carry them. If the event or meaning is not enacted or transferred within a group context, the meaning is discarded.

Figure 8. Intersections of Culture Theory and Organizational Theory.

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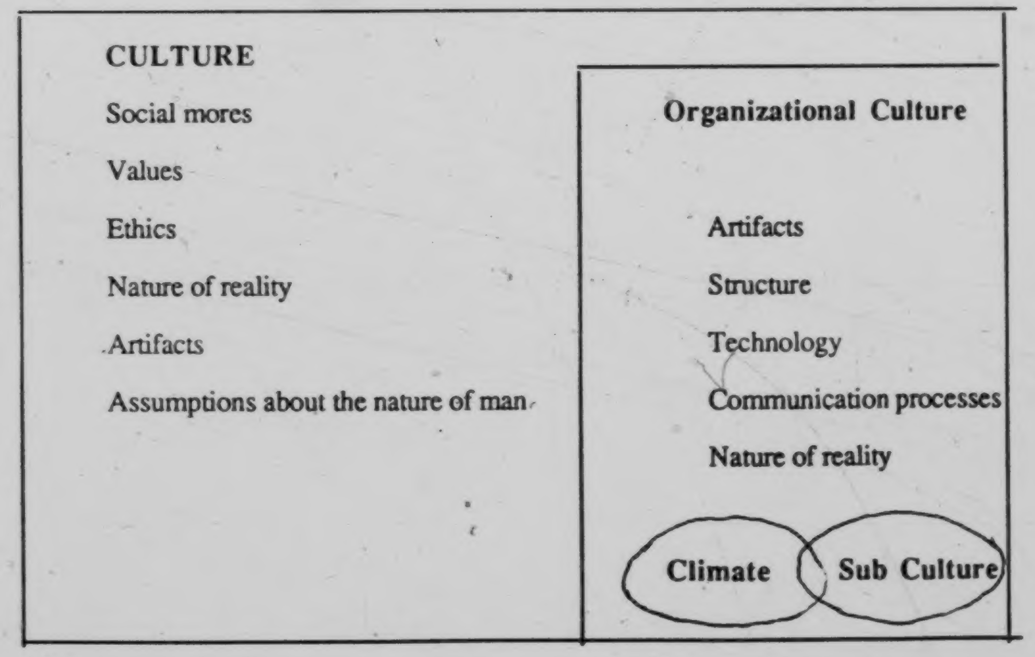
Scource: Smircich, 1983, p. 342

Irrespective of this, culture focuses attention on the non-rational expressive experiences of an organization. As Morgan (1986, p. 135) indicated " the modern myth of rationality " is being exposed and it may lead to true understanding of what occurs within an organization, rather than the imposition of some structured model to explain organizations. This contrasts with the pervasiveness of the perception of order. Obsession with order is a cultural phenomenon that exists even within the chaos theories of the physicists, and can also be seen in the desire of organizational theorists to impose some structured model as the explanation of the nature organizations.

Culture and Climate - The Linkage

Figure 9 indicates that culture is the umbrella concept under which climate can shelter. Culture is concerned with the understandings of a group and how they cope with external adaptation and internal integration problems. These processes become internalized as appropriate ways to think and perceive the reality they represent. Climate is more of a measure of an individual's perception of factors within an organization. It is not linked to the conscious and unconscious sense making for the total group. Measurement of climate can give indication of aspects of the culture of a group, but these indicators are most likely to be at the artifact and creations level of the culture.

Figure 9. Relationship between Culture and Climate


CULTURE
Social mores
Values
Ethics
Nature of reality
Artifacts
Assumptions about the nature of man
Organizational Culture
Artifacts
Structure
Technology
Communication processes
Nature of reality
Climate
Sub Culture

Work by Gordon and Cummins (1979) cited in Gordon (1985, p. 106) utilized eleven dimensions for their measurement of climate. They are: clarity of direction, organizational reach, integration, top management contact, encouragement of individual initiative, conflict resolution, performance clarity, performance emphasis, action orientation, compensation and human resource development. Gordon stated that these dimensions allow for the plotting of an organizational culture. However the graphs bear a striking resemblance to those initially plotted by Halpin and Croft. Gordon proposed that from an analysis of the individual graphs of culture it is possible to plan to change the culture of an organization. This appears to be based on a simplistic manipulation of the artifacts of the culture. It does not confront the basic understandings and assumptions of organizational culture. Argyris and Schon (1980) have shown that this negates double loop learning and hence does not produce true cultural change. It seems that the word culture is being used in the private enterprise business context when actually mapping aspects of climate, which are a subset of surface level cultural variables. Bates (1986, p. 1) argued against this corporate use of the culture concept and indicated in a recent paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association that "there are serious theoretical objections to the emasculated conception of culture presented by the advocates of corporate culture." This use of culture could be a possible reflection of entrepreneurial enterprise in the free market organizational consultant economy.

Culture - Utility of the Concept for Educational Administration

Schools exist within a predetermined hierarchical structure. This structure has evolved from the monitorial school system of the industrial revolution. At that time the head-teacher was responsible for the training of the monitors to assist with the educative process. Classes were large and the methodology clearly defined. However, with the increasing size of schools and the devolution of authority and associated tasks to the school, the role of the principal has changed. Principals since then have had to assume many roles and respond to conflicting demands. Even with the devolution of authority Payne (1987) argued that principal behavior is influenced very strongly by parents who legitimate their behaviors within predetermined boundaries. Allison (1984) stated that principals are the lowest members of the central administration and have little chance of being the leaders of the technology within their own organization. In recent times as part of the "effective schools" movement, there has been a call for principals to once again become the instructional leaders of their schools. This has placed enormous demands upon them, especially in large secondary schools where there are numerous people with potentially greater technical expertise. The hierarchical structure in a secondary school with subject department heads is an indication of this. The individual subject professional expertise resides lower in the organizational structure. One way for principals to overcome these deficiencies is for them to assume the role of cultural leader within their organization shaping the direction of the organization's development.

The Principal as Cultural Leader

Sergiovanni (1984) indicated that there are required forces of leadership for highly effective schools. These forces can be classified in five levels: technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural. They correspond to the following leadership metaphors: management engineer, human engineer, clinical practitioner, chief and high priest. The presence of skills in the first three is linked to routine school competence, but the last two are essential for excellence in schooling. As chief, it is necessary for the principal to be involved with modelling appropriate mores and giving purpose to the school. The participants learn what is of value to the leader and the school, have a sense of order and direction and enjoy sharing that with others. This leads to an increase in motivation and commitment.

When a principal is acting as the high priest of a school the participants become believers in the ideological system of the school. They are members of a strong culture that provides them with a sense of personal importance and work meaningfulness. This is highly motivating. As the high priest the principal is also responsible for gaining adherence to a tightly held set of values inherent within the ideology of the culture.

This model underpins the research findings of Leithwood and Montgomery (1986). They classified principals at four levels, with level four being the ideal. Level four principals were high systematic problem solvers. Their solutions to problems were based on adherence to the goals of the school. These goals were used to produce consistency among staff as to the directions for action. This is a process of culture reinforcement.

As the cultural leader it is necessary for the principal to manage organizational symbolism. This is aimed at the creation of a reality for the members which influences actions that are taken. Gioia (1986, p. 52) stated:

> Geertz (1973) said that a symbol is *any* object, act, or event that serves as a means for conception. Cassirer (1944) contended that *all* human understanding is essentially symbolic in nature. Both these positions suggest the pervasiveness of symbols in defining the texture of understandings.

While recognizing that virtually anything can be a symbol, it behooves the principal to use symbols that serve as meaningful representations of aspects of the school experience. Symbolic actions influence beliefs and values and thus can sustain a given perception of reality or assist in the fabrication of a new one (Feldman and March, 1981).

This process of meaning construction is called sense-making. As Gioia (1986, p. 61) indicated it "entails intricate (and often unconscious) process of attending, attributing, relating, reflecting, retaining and so on." Hence it is important for the leader of a school to schedule time within the work place for reflection. Reflection assists the relating of actions and attribution of activities to sense making. Weick (1979, p. 4) concluded that "all knowing and meaning arise from reflection." Without this reflection time it is not possible to confront the deeper assumptions of the school culture. Non-confrontation only produces pseudo-change in some of the outward manifestations of the culture. Goodlad (1984) has posited that very little has changed in the schooling process during the last fifty years. The technology of teacher dominated talk and interaction persists despite the greater understanding of the cognitive processes of students. The technology does not give cognizance to this increased understanding.

The provision of quality time for meetings has not been seen as a high priority. Staff meetings traditionally occur at the end of a busy day when individual energy levels of the participants can be low. After the meetings, participants have other pressing demands and so socialization and informal conversation is limited. Gronn (1984) reminds us that administration is " talk" and we know that language is a basic cultural building block. Without the quality time to confront core assumptions of the teaching culture, "double loop" learning will not occur and Goodlad's observations will continue to ring true. The provision of quality meeting time as part of the core working conditions would assist with the development of communication between the leader and followers. Wu (1988) reminds us that change requires both time and effort. "As any clssroom teacher or administrator will tell you, time is at a premium. In today's schools, there is very little free time, and what is available is jealously guarded" (p. 12). Until the allocation of meeting time is given a high priority, the current economic squeeze on schools mitigates against provision of the time.

Parental Participation

Throughout recorded history children have learned by modelling their parents' social, moral and intellectual behavior and survival skills. Berger (1986) referred to them as being the oldest and most essential part of any education system. As industrialized society developed the educative role of the parents steadily decreased; the major responsibility for education was delegated almost entirely to the school.

Pestalozzi was dubbed by Berger (1986) as the "father of parent education" (p. 26). As a parent educator he championed the role of parents in the educative process. Following his work the acknowledgement of parent influence in the educative process continued to be promulgated and The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was founded in the United States in 1897. This organization was initially concerned with the the passing of child labor laws and the monitoring of children's affairs such as general health and welfare issues. Nevertheless, through the activities of this organization, parental participation in education became institutionalized. It remained largely at the level of influencing policy until as Cullingford (1985) aptly indicated, parents were rediscovered in the 1960's-70's. Highett (1988, p. 17) cited a report from the Australian Schools Commission (1977-79) which read:

> Parents have long been excluded from any significant role in the school. The immediate problem is to encourage them into the school on terms which convey their right and capacity to participate in framing its educational program and to assist teachers to enter a new kind of relationship with parents.

The South Australian Government is actively pursuing increased parental participation in all levels of schooling. It has initiated a policy that gives parents decision-making rights at all levels of school management and the Advertiser (a State wide daily newspaper) on March 22nd, 1989 headlined a full page feature with the leader "Parent power grows in the schools." This policy is an attempt to have parents involved with the ongoing administration of each school. This is in contrast to Alberta where Grainger (1984) found in Edmonton that the role seen by both the parents themselves and the professionals was one of service and support, and Rea (1977) concluded there was little evidence of direct community influence in Alberta.

Traditionally popular parent participation has been seen as episodic and aroused by particular issues (Wirt and Kirst, 1982, p. 119). This type of involvement is reflected in the responsiveness of schools to demands from the local environment. They need to be responsive because schools need to retain high levels of legitimacy and support. Inherent within the maintenance of support is the necessity to maintain high levels of satisfaction so enhancing reputation. Meyer, Scott and Deal (1983) argued "schools live and die according to their conformity to environmental rules rather than to particular output rules" (p. 415). To achieve this conformity two aspects are involved, first, "schools need to keep their environment happy, and . . . [second], the schools need to keep their own members happy" (p. 416). This is challenging because as Willower (1982) has indicated, "most citizens have personal experience of schools, the profession has no convincing jargon, boards are elected, and society is always vigilant for its young" (cited in Payne, 1987, p. 29). Payne goes on to argue that principals are the guardians of the thresholds of schools. Principals maintain the legitimacy of the schools by defining the limits of acceptable teacher behavior based on their perception of community expectations. Payne further enlarged on this by defining the concepts of school vulnerability and a zone of tolerance within which a school operates. He cited Summerfield's (1971) study where "four principals gave whatever time was necessary to parental queries and complaints and the central office returned every call and answered every letter from parents" (p. 30). Payne (1987, p. 31) indicated that good administrators are supposed to keep people happy and contented and principals are anxious to avoid conflict because of the negative effect it can have on their careers.

Boyd (1976) has written extensively on the vulnerability of schools and the affects on the behavior of the administrators within them. In effect a "zone of tolerance exists whose boundaries or thresholds mark schools' vulnerability and incline them to avoid conflict, particularly as the boundaries may not be clearly defined" (p. 595). Payne indicated that professional leadership can be exercised within the zone but administrators are not inclined to test the limits because,

> (a) their sense of vulnerability, (b) the paucity of incentives for taking risks, (c) their professional ideology, and (d) selection and socialization procedures. Rather they are more inclined to anticipate community reactions in order to avoid conflict and "so citizens get what they desire in public schools . . . because local educators anticipate, or happen to agree with their desires." (Boyd 1982a, p. 1125)

Boyd's explanation of why administrators do not utilize all of their discretion but instead constrain their reactions by anticipating community responses implies considerable community influence. The environment always impinges on the school and the principal is required to manage the boundary between it and the school in order to maintain equilibrium. The moves by the South Australian government further open the gateways in the boundaries of the schools, and have the potential to allow increased access to the teaching core. At present schools "immunize to some extent, the uncertain and unpredictable consequences of the actual teaching enterprise. Teaching work is delegated on a "good faith" and uninspected basis to teachers. By and large they do the best they can" (Meyer, Scott and Deal, p. 424). The management of the increased scrutiny that will possibly follow moves to increase parental participation in the schools, will be a new challenge for principals within South Australia. The scrutiny has the potential to change the thresholds of parental acceptance and tolerance, and so increase the vulnerability of principals.

Summary

The early emphasis on effectiveness in organizations has lead to the development of a body of literature on school effectiveness, which in turn links with the theory and research on school change processes. For the principal of a school there is increasingly a supply of articles and journal summaries drawing on research and extrapolating this research to prescriptive guidelines for school improvement. How to ingest this information remains problematic for the practitioner.

Judging effectiveness is something that every person does on a continuing basis, and each person bases that judgement on how the organization affects them. Schools answer to multiple constituencies, and given that leader success is dependent on the leader's ability to simultaneously satisfy the idealizations of those multiple constituencies, there can be no prescriptive cook book approach to assist an educational leader assess organizational effectiveness. The literature on school effectiveness exhibited an array of criteria and problems for judging school and principal effectiveness but as indicated by Bossert (1988) these

> problems do not suggest that the findings from the effectiveness studies should be ignored. The cumulative evidence, as well as the practical experience of educators,

> supports the importance of having high expectations for students, developing a positive climate, improving instruction and demonstrating leadership. These are necessary but probably not sufficient elements for effective schools (cited in Grady, Wayson, & Zirkel, 1989, p.21).

However, as stated by Reid, Hopkins, & Holly (1987, p. ii)

> The literature is also in agreement on two issues. First, positive features of 'effective schools' are to do with process-type manifestations of schooling. . . . The second aspect on which the literature is in agreement is that all of these features are amenable to alteration by concerted action on the part of the school staff.

The problem faced by the staff is in making judgements about which features are to be tackled. Not all features of organizational performance are taken into account by constituencies when they make their judgements about effectiveness. "Only those specific facets of performance which are important to individuals enter into their assessment" (Zammuto, 1982, p. 2). Hence the first step in selecting effectiveness criteria for judgement of an organization, is to select the constituencies whose perspective will be considered. The six critical questions posed by Cameron (1980) and shown in Figure 3 are important. Use of these can then lead to refinement of the criteria that could be used for assessing school effectiveness.

Even with the use of these questions, due consideration must be given to research by Baier (1958), Watkins (1963), and Popper (1966), cited by Cameron (1984, p.247). Their research indicated that people have a great deal of difficulty in defining what they desire, but they are much more willing and able to focus on the things they wish to avoid. Consideration should therefore be given to the concept of ineffectiveness as proposed by Cameron (1984) and shown in Figure 4.

Principals as managers are involved in work that is characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation. Mintzberg (1973) proposed that the activities of a manager can be grouped within three areas covering ten roles; interpersonal, informational and decisional. The interpersonal role covers the relationships that the manager has with others and occurs when he/she is acting as a figurehead for the organization, as a leader and as a liaison person for the organization. The informational role occurs when the manager monitors progress and performance, disseminates information and acts as a spokesperson for the organization. The decisional role occurs when the manager acts as the entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator for the organization. Consideration of actions within these roles can allow the principal to identify the relevant constituents to be asked the six critical question. The perspective of the relevant constituencies could then give rise to the ineffectiveness factors that must be considered when judging the effectiveness of a school.

The complexity of the task should not deter action in attempting to remove ineffectiveness from within a school. There is no time for complacency because as Deal (1983, p. vi) has stated "most institutions and their leaders are being asked to prove that they make a difference, to show that they produce results." Schools now exist within a turbulent environment and appropriate response to the changing expectations of constituents within this environment, characterize excellent organizations (Peters, 1987).

The change literature clearly indicates the necessity of involving the implementers of policy or implementers of improvement strategies in the planning process. They are the final "street level bureaucrats" (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973) and will determine what happens and hence the success of the process being undertaken. The challenge for the school administrator is to produce the vision and resultant actions that reflect the professional perspective of the educators while accommodating the realities of multiple constituencies within the school environment.

Moves to change the levels of parental participation brings new players into the "street level bureaucracy." Parents will by their very participation add to and change the culture of each school. The management of this culture is generally seen as a principal responsibility. The changes could possibly indicate movement in the threshold of parents about acceptable and non acceptable behavior from participants within schools. Schools have traditionally maintained very high levels of acceptability and satisfaction by largely conforming to environmental demands and rules rather than particular output demands. This buffers the core technology from the direct interventions of persons within the external environment. However, the new gateways being opened within the boundaries of schools by increasing parental participation in the management decision-making processes of schools could change this aspect. Increased involvement could lead to closer observation of the core-technology and increased challenge of the teaching processes and methodology operating within the schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research design, methodological procedures used and the research context form the subject of this chapter. The overall research strategy is followed by a description of specific techniques used to design the questionnaires and processes used to collect, organize and analyze the data. This discussion concludes by addressing sampling, gaining approval for the study, preliminary Nominal Group Technique meetings, the development and pilot testing of the questionnaires and the interview process, distribution and return of questionnaires, and the analysis and reporting of questionnaire and interview findings.

Research Design

To obtain information relating to the research questions, this study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for, as Miles and Huberman (1984) wrote, "few researchers are not blending these two perspectives" (p. 20). They claim that this is preferable providing that due attention is given to the problems of drawing valid meaning from the data. The aspect of valid meaning is defended later in this chapter.

Data collection for the study involved four main stages: (a) a review of the literature; (b) a series of Nominal Group Technique meetings with principals to generate data on aspects of school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness which were then utilized to develop questionnaires for distribution; (c) distribution of questionnaires about school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness to parents, principals and superintendents; and (d) follow up interviews with 32 parents, 13 principals and 8 superintendents. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires students from the Graduate Diploma Professional Development program from the Sturt site of the South Australian College of Advanced Education were involved in the pilot testing of the questionnaires. One parent, one principal and one superintendent who did not participate in the study were also involved in preliminary interviews and pilot testing of the interview techniques and instruments. These strategies, along with the review of the literature, helped to ensure that all important issues were investigated and the pilot testing provided a check on the validity of instrumentation.

The investigation of the parents', principals' and superintendents' perceptions of school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness constituted the major methodological focus for the study. The follow up interviews added to the knowledge about selected issues and allowed investigation of the types of interventions made by parents when they perceived a school is not meeting effectiveness standards they deemed necessary (Research Question 2). There can however be no assurance about the representativeness of those perceptions or interventions.

The questionnaire for parents requested that they rate the overall effectiveness of the principal and the overall effectiveness of the school that they were associated with as well as the importance and effectiveness of the school or principal on a substantial array of items (Research Question 1). Similarly the questionnaire for principals requested that they rate their overall effectiveness and the overall effectiveness of their school as well as the importance and effectiveness of the school or themselves on a substantial array of items (Research Question 1). The third questionnaire for superintendents requested them to chose three specific schools and rate the overall effectiveness of the three principals and the overall effectiveness of those three schools as well as the effectiveness of the school or principal on a substantial array of items. Statistical analysis identified the best predictors of overall school effectiveness as well as systematic differences based on organizational as well as principal characteristics. Many important criteria for judging the school effectiveness emerged from analysis of questionnaire responses. Interview questions were used to follow up the matter of interventions (Research Question 3) and to explore factors associated with school ineffectiveness. Open ended responses in the questionnaires about the factors constraining the effectiveness of principals and the effectiveness of schools were also compared with the data gathered during the interviews.

The regional selection for this exploratory study of multiple perspectives was imposed for three reasons. Firstly, junior primary and primary schools in this administrative area of the South Australian Education Department covered both urban and non urban areas. Secondly, this area was geographically compact and the Area Director indicated his willingness to participate and support the research. Finally, in an already large study, there was a need to limit the research design and this area provided a convenient location.

Methodology

As Kerlinger (1973, p. 696) remarked, "the function of the methodology . . . section of the research report, of course, is to tell the reader what was done to solve the problem." The following discussion proceeds with that intent.

The methodology of this study was influenced by the review of the literature relating to effectiveness in organizations, perception theory and Payne's (1988) findings about parent control of principal work behavior Also as Johnson (1988, p. 94) indicated, ". . . the examination of perception theory demonstrated the inescapable influence of perceptions of the respondents and the researcher upon the study. Both influences highlighted a need to attend to validity, reliability and objectivity in the investigation."

Much has been written about organizational effectiveness but there is no consensus on the approach or criteria to be used when judging it. Cameron and Whetton (1983, p. 20) summarized this when they wrote that "no theories of organizational effectiveness per se are possible, the criteria for assessing the construct are both divergent and difficult to identify. . . " Every person's conception has within it some priori of the factors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. However, these conceptions depend upon the perceptions of the individual. Mindful of Johnson's (1988, p. 94) cautions concerning the influence of the researchers perceptions, a Nominal Group Technique process was initiated with the principals to determine what factors they associated with school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness. This process assisted with the incorporation of an expansive array of organizational dimensions into the instruments. At the same time the cautions echoed by Cameron and Whetton (1983) indicated a need to delimit this study and to specify clearly the focus for the study. These cautions were heeded and covered in the delimitations section of Chapter 1.

Selection of Samples

The design chosen required extensive contact with principals and parents and hence the Northern Area of the Education Department of South Australia was chosen because of its spread of school types, geographical location and size, socio economic variation of the school communities and convenience for the researcher. For the Nominal Group Technique meetings all Junior Primary (30) and Primary principals (102) within the Northern Area were invited to attend one of the five meetings. Principals who attended the meetings and who subsequently volunteered (14 of the total number of Junior Primary principals and 59 of the total number of Primary principals within the Area) were then requested to select five parents from their school community to respond to the questionnaires. Twelve principals were unable to assist and hence 305 questionnaires were distributed to parents. Principals were urged to contact parents who were supporters of the school as well as parents who had approached the school about a matter that concerned tehm. All other principals with students in the R-7 grade range also received questionnaires. Eighty nine percent of the parent respondents indicated that they were willing to be interviewed and a sample of 32 were utilized. No attempt was made to stratify the sample other than those who were able to be interviewed during the times available and interviews ceased when the information being offered became repetitive.

Sampling of the principals for the follow up interviews was conducted on a different basis. Seventy two percent of the respondents indicated a willingness to be interviewed and hence an initial effort was made to include respondents representing a diversity of perspectives and circumstances. Thirteen principals were interviewed and the interviews ceased when no new information was being offered. This strategy did not make the findings any more generalizable but it did provide for a wide range of situational issues and allow for divergent personal issues to be addressed.

Superintendents (27) with a primary responsibility for schools containing Junior Primary and Primary students within the State of South Australia were contacted and invited to participate in the research. As the state system was undergoing a reassignment of and a reduction in the number of superintendents, following a review of the Superintendent of School's function, the sample included some Superintendents who had had this responsibility in the previous academic year. A brief outline of the research (five pages) and its purpose was sent to each superintendent along with a letter inviting them to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Fourteen of the respondents indicated their willingness to be interviewed and were selected on the initial basis of metropolitan and near country location. Eight were interviewed and once again the interviews ceased when little new information was being gained.

Approval to Conduct the Research

In October 1987 a letter was sent to the Director General of Education in South Australia requesting permission to conduct research within Education Department schools. The policy of direct contact with schools was reaffirmed and that individual principals have the right to accede to or deny such requests. In February 1988 contact with the Area Director of the Northern Area resulted in the researcher's appointment as a Superintendent of Schools to that area for the third term of the academic year and the Director's agreement and support for the research to be conducted within that area.

Prior to the researchers departure for Australia the research proposal was submitted to an Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta. The research was approved as suitable for school personnel and in accordance with the university's ethical standards.

On the researcher's arrival in the Northern Area of the Education Department of South Australia a circular was sent to all schools outlining the researchers special duties as a Superintendent for the term and attached was a brief outline of the research that would be conducted (Appendix A). During the same week contact was made with the district secretary of each principal's group and an interview held with each person. The research was explained to each person and a copy of the dissertation proposal was left with them. Their assistance was solicited and they were asked to contact their colleagues about the series of Nominal Group Technique (NGT) meetings to be held. In the second week of the school term all principals with students in grades R-7 were invited to participate in the initial phase of the research, a series of Nominal Group Technique meetings and a copy of the letter is in Appendix A. Principals were informed that they would participate in and learn a process valuable as a staff meeting/parent meeting tool and would receive the total group output of school effectiveness factors and school ineffectiveness factors. The lists of factors associated with school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness could be used as a basis for self reflection or to assist with a review of their school's operation.

Nominal Group Technique Meetings

Principals were informed of the purpose of the research, the time commitment required of them if they participated, and the venues for the NGT meetings. Five meetings were held with approximately fourteen principals attending each meeting. Three of the meetings were used to focus on school effectiveness factors and the other two focused on school ineffectiveness factors.

A brief description of the NGT meeting process follows. Further information is presented by Delbecq, Van De Ven, and Gustafson (1975) and Lonsdale (1975).

The NGT process was developed to help people deal with problems, set priorities, find solutions and review proposals with a minimum of discussion. Four steps are involved in the process:

Generation of ideas. Individuals within the group were given time for silent independent generation of ideas in writing. The ideas were recorded in brief sentences or phrases on work sheets. The researcher participated in the group and generated ideas based upon the literature review so ensuring that important aspects associated with school effectiveness were not ignored.

Recording of ideas. Each group member in turn then provided one briefly phrased idea which was recorded on a display sheet for all to see. This process continued until the group ran out of ideas.

Serial discussion of ideas. Each item on the display chart was clarified. The aim was not to reach group agreement but to ensure that each item was understood.

Voting on ideas. Each meeting generated in excess of 100 items and these were used by individuals to generate their nine most important items. Individuals selected a number of items from the displayed list and wrote the items on a card. Individuals then discarded cards until nine remained. The cards were then spread so that each individual could see all of their items at one time. Each person then selected the most important item from their selection, numbered it as nine and then turned it over. They then selected the least important remaining card, numbered it as one and also turned it over. This continued until all cards had been selected and numbered. The cards from all participants were collected, shuffled, and the rank order scores of each item recorded. These votes were tallied and distributed to all participants along with the collated voting list from all meetings.

Pilot Testing of Questionnaires

Immediately following the NGT meetings the ideas were used to distil a comprehensive list of factors associated with school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness. The list was compared with factors identified in the review of the literature, deficiencies were rectified and the revised list was then used to generate items for a questionnaire. Most items on the questionnaire required rating on a forced-choice Likert type scale, one for importance and one for effectiveness. The effectiveness scale reflected the current view in the literature that effectiveness/ineffectiveness are treated as a continuous dimension. By definition the removal of ineffectiveness factors gives rise to an effective organization.

The questionnaire was structured into three sections for superintendents and four sections for principals and parents; Section A explored school effectiveness factors; Section B was concerned with principal effectiveness factors; Section C gathered information about the respondent's school (this was not included in the superintendents questionnaire), and; Section D gathered information about the respondent. Section A was further categorized into factors associated with educational program, student factors, staff factors, communication-community factors, financial management factors, physical facility factors and management factors.

Owing to the dearth of research on ineffectiveness constraints experienced by schools and the fact that Cameron (1984, p. 243) argued that the construct space for ineffectiveness appears to be more narrow and more easily mapped, open ended questions were provided to allow responses in this area and so glean additional ideas and explanations which respondents viewed as important for both effectiveness and ineffectiveness in primary schools.

The initial draft of the questionnaire was tested with two principals and one superintendent. Their comments were utilized to prepare draft two of the questionnaire. This draft was sent via Fax machine to the University of Alberta for initial reaction from the supervising professor. The comments received were incorporated into a third draft which was tested with a class of students from the Sturt site of the South Australian College of Advanced Education Graduate Diploma program in Professional Development. After completing the questionnaires they responded during a forum about the completeness, appropriateness and clarity of items, the layout and the length of the three questionnaires. The comments resulted in stylistic modifications reducing the apparent length of the questionnaire, and changes to three items. Several respondents questioned the appropriateness of the four point importance scale and the five point effectiveness scale but a decision was made to leave the scales so that some individual items could be compared with items in several recent studies completed in Alberta.

Distribution and Return of Questionnaires

On the 5th of September the questionnaires for principals were mailed to all schools containing students in the R-7 grade range within the Northern Area. Principals who had attended the NGT meetings and who had agreed to distribute questionnaires to parents received five copies of the parent questionnaire. The covering letter reaffirmed the necessity for their support and outlined the tasks required of them. They were asked to forward the questionnaire to parents who had made contact with the school during the current academic year. The principals were requested to choose people who had had either formal written or verbal contact with the school to express support for, or to raise concerns about some aspect of the school's activities. Included with each parent questionnaire was a brief summary of the research, plus a covering letter requesting their support plus a separate response sheet and envelope. Parents were asked to forward the completed questionnaires and response sheets in separate sealed envelopes to the principal of the school so that the school could forward them through the courier system to the researcher at the Area Office.

On the 7th of September questionnaires were mailed to the Superintendents. Enclosed with each was a brief summary of the research and a letter requesting their support. To ensure confidentiality for all respondents there were no identifying marks on the questionnaires and all response sheets and questionnaires were returned in separate envelopes.

The third school term finished on the 23rd of September and follow-up letters were forwarded to all school principals and superintendents who had not responded by the first Friday of the new term, the 14th of October. Principals who had distributed questionnaires to parents were requested to follow up on parent responses as required. The responses generated by this action were forwarded by a colleague to the researcher at the University of Alberta.

Of the 132 questionnaires distributed to principals 84 were returned (64%) and 61 volunteered for follow-up interview. Sixty one principals agreed to send questionnaires to parents and of the 305 distributed 190 were returned (62%) and 169 of the parents volunteered for follow-up interviews. Twenty seven superintendents received questionnaires and 21 were returned (77%) with 14 volunteering for a follow-up interview.

The Interview

The effectiveness and ineffectiveness measures used by constituents to judge the school's activities and outputs, are tied to their perception of organizational reality. Therefore interviews were used to supplement the questionnaire data and they added depth to the information gathered. According to Kvale (1984) a qualitative interview is

> centred on the interviewee's life-world; it seeks to understand the meaning of phenomena in his (or her) life-world; it is qualitative, descriptive, and specific; it is presuppositionless; it is focussed on certain themes; it is open for ambiguities, and changes; it depends upon the sensitivity of the interviewer; it takes place in an interpersonal interaction, and it may be a positive experience. (p. 174)

Data gathering by this type of interviewing guarded against the incursion of the data matching the researcher's view of relevance. At the same time, the perceptions gained from selected respondents afforded only partial views of the reality perceived by the participants. To gain a wider perspective on the multiple realities, people from each of the constituencies were interviewed.

Reliability was enhanced by structured and standardized characteristics while validity was gained from openness. Merton et al. (1956) claim the non-directive interviews can "uncover a diversity of relevant responses, whether or not these have been anticipated by the inquirer. . . . It gives the interviewee an opportunity to express himself about matters of central significance to him rather than those presumed to be important by the interviewer" (p. 43). Gordon (1975) described the semi-structured interview as giving "the interviewer some choice as to the order of the questions, freedom to attempt alternative wordings of the same question, and the freedom to use neutral probes if the first response is not clear, complete or relevant" (p. 61). The interviews were semi-structured according to a predetermined schedule. However, an evocative technique was used to pursue critical incidents associated with interventions initiated at the school level by the parent and superintendent constituent groups when they deemed that some aspect of the school's operation to be less effective than they deemed necessary. The questions in the interview schedule were based on issues raised in the questionnaires, and from items obtained by interview trial with one person from each constituent group, and others which emerged from the literature, the experience of the researcher, preliminary studies and associated discussion.

The semi-structured interviews added depth to the questionnaire data and allowed for triangulation. The study featured some of Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh's (1985, p. 337) descriptive survey techniques by inquiring into the status quo and attempted to measure what existed without questioning why it existed; and of their explanatory survey, which attempted to explain attitudes and behavior on the basis of data gathered at a point in time. There was a focus on ineffectiveness as a construct because as indicated in the literature review, people are much more consistent in reporting on what they view as failures.

In the trial interviews all persons felt comfortable with a tape recorder being used, but each person was given the option of having the interview taped or not. No person chose not to have the interview tape recorded. A purposive sampling technique was used for selection for interview. Guba and Lincoln cited by Borg and Gall (1983), compared sampling techniques in research design and stated that "sampling is almost never representative or random but purposive, intended to exploit competing views and fresh perspectives as fully as possible. Sampling stops when information becomes redundant rather than when subjects are representatively sampled" (p. 765). Hence interviews were conducted with members of each constituent group and resulted in 13 principals, 32 parents and eight superintendents being interviewed.

The researcher used a parent to interview 26 of the parents. As part of a training process, this person was first interviewed and then discussed the process with the researcher. The questions were discussed and the intent of the questions clarified. The parent was then given time to read the research proposal of the researcher and to also listen to the interview experienced. The trainee made notes of the prompting type responses used by the researcher and of any other matters that needed to be raised with the researcher. After further discussion a trial interview was then done by the trainee. The researcher and the trainee listened to this trial interview together, analyzed and discussed the process. This led to both feeling satisfied with the approach being used and the trained parent then commenced to arrange interviews with other parents.

Analysis of Questionnaire Data and Reporting of Findings

Superintendents were not asked to rate the importance of each item. Instead open ended questions invited them to record their three most important factors for both school and principal effectiveness. Principals and parents were asked to rate the importance of each item as well as rate the effectiveness of the school or principal on that item. Most of the questionnaire responses suited quantitative analysis. Percentage frequency distributions and mean ratings of importance and effectiveness were calculated for each variable. Items in both the principal sample and parent sample that had a mean score of greater than or equal to 3.5 for importance were identified. If items were common to both groups then they were extracted. A factor analysis on the effectiveness ratings of these items was employed to reduce the number of items into a smaller more manageable and explainable set of concepts (Kim & Mueller, 1987, p. 9). Pearson product moment correlations were used to further examine the relationships within each factor. The means of each factor for each constituent group were calculated and the groups compared. Further, to identify central dimensions of effectiveness, stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was used to establish the best predictors of overall school effectiveness and overall principal effectiveness for each group of constituents.

Open-ended responses were invited in the questionnaire from each group on the identification of the inhibiting factors associated with both school and principal ineffectiveness. Many responses were generated and these were content analyzed and frequency counts were made for the issues identified.

Analysis and Reporting of the Follow-up Interviews

All interviews were transcribed and entered into the computer program "Factfinder" for a Macintosh computer. Each paragraph of each transcript was coded, entered into the program and hence then able to be sorted electronically. A frequency count for any code was then possible along with the production of a complete verbatim statement of the associated issue or facts. This provided a rapid way for content analysis, or "counting the number of times that particular ideas or words are presented" (Travers, 1969, p. 228) and hence the weight of support for any issue. At the same time there was considerable diversity of opinion and meaning and these are often presented in full in the respondents' own words. Some minor editorial changes have been made to the quotations presented. These however were limited to changes in the grammatical construction of the verbal responses and the meaning was protected in all cases. In reporting the numerical analysis of the quantitative data (Research Question 1) it was appropriate to present the parallel responses from the interviews to further expand on the understanding of the quantitative data. However the majority of the information to answer Research Questions 2 and 3 came from an analysis of the qualitative data.

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches and as such dual methods of quality control were considered. In the sections that follow four areas of concern are referred to, (internal) validity, generalizability (or external validity), reliability and objectivity. Equivalent labels for naturalistic research are Guba's (1981) credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. However, as indicated by Johnson (1988)

> a number of educational and other social researchers have highlighted techniques for helping to ensure high quality research in studies that are quantitative (e.g., Ayr, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1985; Englehart, 1972; Kerlinger, 1973; Mouly, 1978; Shaw & Wright, 1967; Wrightsman, 1977) and, more recently, qualitative (e.g., Bogdan & Bicklen, 1982; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1985; Owens, 1982; Skrtic, 1985). (p. 113)

Validity

Validity refers to how truthful, genuine and authentic data are in representing what they purport to measure. Content validity was an issue in this study. There was a need to ensure that the items were representative of and comprehensive in assessing the school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness construct. The questionnaires were formed as a result of the input of 73 principals attending five different NGT meetings. Reactions to drafts of the final questionnaire were given by students in a graduate program, reviewed by a professor at the University of Alberta and by two principals and one superintendent who were not in the final sample. In addition interviews allowed for additional probing in aspects of school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness. All respondents permitted tape recording of these interviews and were relaxed, friendly and quite willing to give personal opinions about aspects under investigation. Parents in particular were most open about both good and bad personal episodes they had experienced at the local school or Area office.

Validity requires considered responses about the issues of concern. Parents, principals, and superintendents were asked to rate both the principal and the school for overall effectiveness. This could be a sensitive issue but anonymity was protected in the questionnaire stages of the data gathering and confidentiality was guaranteed to people who were interviewed and may have assisted in this process. In the covering letter to all participants the researcher assured participants of access to the final research report and of personal availability to speak to groups about the findings and implications of the research. The high response rate at an inopportune time of the school year possibly reflects respondents satisfaction with these assurances.

One common method of establishing validity in qualitative research is triangulation (e.g. LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Multiple research methods and data sources are a means of triangulation hence the multiple data gathering processes used within each constituency group played an important confirmatory role.

Generalizability

Generalizability addresses the applicability aspect of the findings of the study beyond the sampled respondents to larger populations. Random sampling is one way of ensuring a measure of generalizability but because of the close contact required with the principals, only those in the Northern Area were asked to participate. The Northern Area has 26% of the state schools with students in the R-7 grade range but no attempt was made to sample the schools randomly.

The qualitative aspects of the study can not be statistically generalized but the interviews continued until the information being gathered became repetitive and a full range of competing perspectives and view points were canvassed. The findings however may have some transferability on a different basis. McCutcheon (1981, p.8) stated that "generalizability in interpretive studies . . . rests on the reader's ability to generalize personally to their own situations rather than on the researcher's generalizing to populations larger than the sample used in the particular study." While the remarks of those interviewed may not be representative of others in the same constituent group, the reporting of these responses in detail may assist some readers in finding personal relevance in some viewpoints.

Reliability

A reliable instrument, according to Treece and Treece (1977) and Mouly (1978), should be able to reproduce a set of measurements in different times and settings. An instrument is often checked statistically by the Guttman spilt-half technique. Travers (1969, p. 158) explained this technique as follows:

> One can regard the items of the test as consisting of two separate tests, each of half length. One can, for example, consider all even-numbered items as one form of the test and all the odd-numbered as another. If the test is highly reliable, then the scores derived from one half of the items should be highly correlated with the scores derived from the other half.

This method was used to test the reliability of the instrument and the results are given in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

Reliability Coefficients for School and Principal Effectiveness Items

	Importance Scale	Effectiveness scale
1. Questionnaire for parents		
(a) School items	.924	.983
(b) Principal items	.916	.981
2. Questionnaire for principals		
(a) School items	.933	.965
(b) Principal items	.887	.954
3. Questionnaire for superintendents		
(a) School items	-----	.989
(b) Principal items	-----	.990

The reliability coefficients tend to be .90 above when the test is "well-made [and] standardized" (Downie and Heath, 1965, p. 220) and the results reported support this aspect of the questionnaire construction.

Objectivity

Objectivity or "confirmability" (Guba,1981) of the study was generated by the methods used to devise the questionnaire, the resultant reporting of the data that utilized well known statistical processes, the interview process plus the detailed account of responses from individuals within each respondent group. The verbatim reporting allows the reader to analyze the researcher's interpretations and conclusions.

Advantages of the Methodological Approaches Employed

The methodology described above was chosen because of its suitability for this kind of research and incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for, as Miles and Huberman (1984) wrote, "few researchers are not blending these two perspectives" (p. 20).

1. The questionnaire design was given particular attention because as Fraser (1983, p. 29) indicated two important problems are ingrained in questionnaire studies.

> Most, if not all, attitude studies rely on some form of questionnaire, in which the designer has pre-empted the questions and other areas of interest, normally with sound justification, but often oriented more to the negative than the positive. The respondent, however, then addresses himself to the questions that are asked and not necessarily to the points that are specifically contentious to him.

Mindful of these cautions, NGT meetings were used to generate the relevant factors for school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness ensuring that the factors were relevant to the respondents and to guard against researcher bias. Open ended questions about positive and negative aspects of school effectiveness were asked and given equal prominence in the format of the questionnaire. Requests for additional information were made at appropriate places and many respondents took the time to write extensively. The transcripts of the written comments in the questionnaires occupied 124 typewritten pages.

2. To further account for the limiting aspect of questionnaires the researcher and an assistant conducted interviews with 53 people from the three major constituent groups represented and a wide range of perspectives and view points from within each group were

obtained. The interviews clarified a range of issues and provided "structural corroboration" (Eisner, 1979, p. 215, cited in Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.106) of the questionnaire and initial NGT responses. The semi-structured interview ensured that not only a range of issues were addressed but also allowed scope for the interviewees to add ideas and pursue issues central to their purpose.

3. The combination of methodologies added to the strength of each approach, while the NGT meetings gave an added depth to the exploratory aspects of the problem. The NGT process allowed for the rapid generation of ideas without the domination of the process by any individual. People found it interesting because each step was different, each member joined in all stages of the process and the NGT process encouraged agreement. It therefore allowed a wide range of principals to influence the design of the questionnaire and allowed for the uncovering of aspects of school effectiveness not indicated by a review of the literature.

4. Given the different interests of the constituencies with a stake in schools, the diversity of types of information collected was not only justified but it was required (Lawler et al. 1983, p. 537). Use of multiple constituent groups to acquire a variety of perspectives on the multiple realities of the issues under investigation, improved the reliability of findings from this study. This approach also limited the impact of the researcher's personal values on the analysis as the judgements were left to the respondent practitioners and one client group, the parents.

5. The design seemed to have particular benefits for the study of organizational effectiveness. Cameron (1984) stated that the

> basic assumption is that it is easier, more accurate, more consensual, and more beneficial for individuals to identify ineffectiveness (problems or faults) than it is to identify criteria of effectiveness (competencies). Under this approach, effectiveness is viewed as a continuum ranging from ineffectiveness to high effectiveness. (p. 235)

Cameron argued that because the construct space of effectiveness is unclear it is to be expected that consensual criteria for measuring effectiveness have not been produced. This reinforced the work of Zammuto (1982) who indicated that preferences for desired outcomes are not stable within an organization. Hence perceptual agreement about desired measures for organizational effectiveness are not stable. Because of this managers tend not to focus their activities on aspects of the organization that appear to be running smoothly. Cameron stated "the luxury of pursuing a more excellent way is largely beyond the scope of managerial concerns" (p. 243). For most managers then the concept of ineffectiveness has more utility. Both the questionnaire and interview allowed for the exploration of factors associated with ineffectiveness.

6. The research did not involve any ethical dilemmas. Participation was a matter of personal choice and all questionnaire responses were anonymous. Interviewees were also assured of anonymity and as such were very relaxed and prepared to discuss very sensitive issues.

Research Orientation, Values and Assumptions of the Researcher

Every researcher approaches their research with a personal frame of reference that focuses and influences the data collection and analysis and the presentation of the findings. Myrdal (1978) stated

> valuations are always with us. Disinterested research there has never been and can never be. Prior to answers there must be questions. There can be no view except from a viewpoint. In the questions raised and the viewpoints chosen, valuations are implied. Our valuations determine our approaches to a problem, the definition of our concepts, the choice of models, the selection of our observations, the presentation of our conclusions--in fact the whole pursuit of a study from beginning to end. If we remain unaware of the valuational basis to our research, this implies that we proceed to reason with one premise missing, which implies an indeterminateness that opens the door for biases. (pp. 778-779)

Outlining the orientation for this study is in no way intended to discredit other orientations to inquiry. This study reflected the researcher's preference for the powerful and in many cases subtle influence of culture on the formation of attitudes, action and perception. This fits the social systems view of organizations where individuals are thought to express broadly consistent expressions of values, perceptions and beliefs as applied to events and circumstances.

The researcher's view of effectiveness and ineffectiveness matches that of Cameron (1984. p. 235) in that the effectiveness is viewed as a continuum ranging from ineffectiveness to high effectiveness. Removal of ineffectiveness by implication means that an organization is effective.

Schools are social systems serving different purposes for the various constituencies involved and as such this perspective fits more with the systems view of organizations and the multiple constituency views of organizational effectiveness. Daft and Wiginton (1979) cited by Cameron and Whetton (1983, p.6.) have argued that "no single symbol, model or metaphor can capture the complexity of organizations, so a variety of different ones are required." Further they argued that "a clear conception of organizations is not needed to understand effectiveness and it is even undesirable (Daft &Wiginton, 1979; Morgan, 1980; Weick, 1977)" (p. 5). Every respondent in the study had a personal conception of what was required for school effectiveness and what made a school or principal ineffective. As such it was assumed that they would accurately report those perceptions.

Summary

To obtain data relating to the research questions, ideas gained from the literature, a series of NGT meetings and pilot testing were used to develop and refine questionnaires for circulation to parents and principals of schools containing students in grades R-7 within the Northern Area of the Education Department of South Australia. The questionnaires for parents and principals required the respondents to rate the importance and effectiveness of the school or principal on a variety of factors and to allocate a global effectiveness rating for both the principal and school. Superintendents were requested to choose three schools from within their district, one that could be classified as ineffective, one moderately effective and one very effective. They were requested to rate these principals and schools on a variety of factors and to allocate a global effectiveness rating for both.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with 32 parents, 13 principals and eight superintendents to probe important issues, to ascertain what types of interventions parents made when some aspect of the school's operation did not meet effectiveness standards they deemed necessary and to assist with the validity of the study.

Statistical data were analyzed by comparisons of means, factor analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Individual responses to open ended questions in the questionnaire and the interview data were analyzed for content and arranged for detailed reporting.

The review of the literature, preliminary NGT meetings, pilot studies and triangulation of research methods and of data sources helped to establish the validity of the procedures and research outcomes. The internal reliability of the questionnaires were tested with the Guttman split half method and found to be satisfactory.

CHAPTER 4

IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the importance placed by parents and principals on the various questionnaire items for school effectiveness and the resultant identification of seven school effectiveness factors. The purpose of the chapter is to provide information that relates to the research question "What criteria are used by parents and principals to judge school effectiveness?"

Questionnaires were distributed to parents and principals and they were asked to rank individual items to indicate the importance they placed on each item for the attainment of school effectiveness. The respondents to the questionnaire were required to rate seventy seven items as "not important", "slightly important", "moderately important", or "extremely important" for school effectiveness. An additional two items required a choice between alternatives and then for the alternative chosen to be rated according to the above scale. From these responses percentage frequency distributions, item means and standard deviations were calculated and a factor analysis was used to generate seven factors associated with school effectiveness. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to further examine the grouping of items within factors. Finally the seven factors were named and a rationale is presented in this chapter for each factor name.

Parent Perceptions on Item Importance for School Effectiveness

Table 4.1 shows the percentage frequency responses, item means and standard deviation from each mean for seventy nine items in the questionnaire as aggregated from the responses of 190 parents. The means ranged from a high of 3.94 to a low of 2.33 on a four point scale. The highest mean was for the importance of the principal having two

Table 4.1

Parents' Ratings of Importance of School Effectiveness Items
(Sorted According to Mean Value)
(n = 190)

Item #	Item	Importance (%f)				Mean	Standard Deviation
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely		
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	0.0	0.0	5.8	94.2	3.94	0.24
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	0.0	2.1	5.8	92.1	3.90	0.37
16	High student morale	0.0	0.0	11.1	88.9	3.89	0.31
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	0.5	1.1	7.5	90.9	3.89	0.39
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	0.0	1.1	9.5	89.5	3.88	0.35
23	High staff morale	0.0	0.5	11.2	88.2	3.88	0.35
70	Providing feedback to staff members	0.0	1.1	11.1	87.9	3.87	0.37
85	How important is the principal's effectiveness for attaining overall school effectiveness in a school with students in the CPC-7 range?	0.0	0.0	14.4	85.6	3.86	0.36
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	0.0	1.1	12.7	86.2	3.85	0.39
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	0.0	0.5	14.2	85.3	3.85	0.38
65	Principal keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	0.0	0.5	14.2	85.3	3.85	0.38
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	0.0	1.1	13.4	85.6	3.85	0.39
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	0.5	0.5	13.2	85.8	3.84	0.42
22	A student behavior management program	0.5	1.6	12.6	85.3	3.83	0.46
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	0.0	2.1	14.2	83.7	3.82	0.44
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	0.0	0.5	18.7	80.7	3.80	0.41
21	High student satisfaction with the school	0.5	1.1	17.5	81.0	3.79	0.47
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	1.1	1.6	15.5	81.8	3.78	0.52
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	1.1	1.6	16.9	80.4	3.77	0.53
27	Staff keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	0.0	3.7	16.4	79.9	3.76	0.51
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	2.1	1.6	14.3	82.0	3.76	0.59
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	0.5	1.1	20.7	77.7	3.76	0.49
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	0.5	3.7	15.9	79.9	3.75	0.54
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	0.0	1.2	22.1	76.7	3.74	0.46

continued

Item #	Item	Importance (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	0.0	2.1	22.2	75.7	3.74	0.49
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	0.0	1.1	24.7	77.2	3.73	0.47
62	Principal acting as a role model	0.5	2.1	22.9	74.5	3.71	0.53
24	Staff with knowledge of new technology	0.0	2.6	24.2	73.2	3.71	0.51
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	0.0	1.6	26.5	72.0	3.70	0.49
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	1.1	3.2	20.1	75.7	3.70	0.58
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	0.5	2.1	24.2	73.2	3.70	0.53
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	1.6	2.1	23.9	72.3	3.67	0.60
28	Teachers willing to consider change	1.1	2.6	25.4	70.9	3.66	0.59
71	Improving the work of staff members	0.0	2.6	29.1	68.3	3.66	0.53
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	0.0	4.2	26.3	69.5	3.65	0.56
43	Gaining of additional resources	0.0	2.7	30.3	67.0	3.64	0.53
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	1.1	0.5	31.7	66.7	3.64	0.55
5	School goals communicated to students	0.0	7.9	20.6	71.4	3.64	0.63
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	0.0	2.1	32.3	65.6	3.64	0.53
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	0.0	5.9	26.5	67.6	3.62	0.60
82	Principal participation in the selection of professional staff members	1.1	2.7	34.1	62.1	3.57	0.61
7	Students encouraged to strive for academic success	0.5	3.2	36.8	59.5	3.55	0.59
48	Appointment of specialist teachers	2.6	8.5	22.2	66.7	3.53	0.76
69	Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	0.5	3.7	38.0	57.8	3.53	0.60
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	2.1	4.2	32.8	60.8	3.52	0.68
50	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	0.5	4.3	37.5	57.6	3.52	0.61
44	Successful fundraising activities within the community	0.0	6.9	34.4	58.7	3.52	0.62
75	Maintaining an open school climate	0.6	5.0	36.7	57.8	3.52	0.62
52	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	1.1	3.8	38.2	57.0	3.51	0.63
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	0.5	5.9	35.6	58.0	3.51	0.63
6	Academic subjects emphasized	0.5	3.7	41.1	54.7	3.50	0.60
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	2.6	7.4	27.9	62.1	3.50	0.75
81	The principal's relationship with the SOS	0.5	7.1	36.1	56.3	3.48	0.65

continued

Item #	Item	Importance (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
15	Recognition of individuals who have different cultures and values	1.6	8.9	30.5	58.9	3.47	0.73
51	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	1.6	4.3	39.8	54.3	3.47	0.66
47	Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	1.1	5.8	44.4	48.7	3.41	0.65
77	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	2.7	10.6	30.9	55.9	3.40	0.78
17	High expectations of students	0.0	9.0	42.6	48.4	3.39	0.65
4	A written review and evaluation process to monitor progress towards achievement of school goals	1.6	7.0	42.2	49.2	3.39	0.69
63	Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	3.2	8.5	34.9	53.4	3.39	0.78
76	Allocating teachers to classes by the principal	0.6	5.0	50.3	44.1	3.38	0.61
32	Leadership roles shared among staff	0.5	8.5	48.1	42.9	3.33	0.65
68	Supervising the work of professional staff members	3.7	9.1	42.2	44.9	3.28	0.78
41	Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	2.1	12.8	44.4	40.6	3.24	0.75
9	Achievement in language arts is emphasized	4.3	14.0	36.6	45.2	3.23	0.85
3	A written public plan for achieving school goals	4.8	13.8	40.7	40.7	3.18	0.84
13	Coordination of the instructional program so that classes at the same year level do the same work	4.7	16.8	34.7	43.7	3.17	0.88
40	Identifying the expectations of the parent community	2.1	15.4	50.0	32.4	3.13	0.74
14	Provision of extra-curricular activities for students	2.1	15.4	51.1	31.4	3.12	0.74
79	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	3.8	17.7	41.9	36.6	3.11	0.83
54	The number of students in the school	8.7	15.3	36.6	39.3	3.07	0.95
67(d)	Two-way channels of communication with wider non parent community	4.7	21.8	37.8	35.6	3.04	0.88
80	Principal involvement in district/area decision making processes	6.5	20.0	40.5	33.0	3.00	0.89
25	A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members	4.8	17.7	51.6	25.8	2.98	0.80
8	Evaluating students against national standards	9.6	18.2	46.0	26.2	2.89	0.91
53	The attraction of additional students to your school	13.0	19.6	34.8	32.1	2.88	1.03
39	Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	7.5	29.9	47.6	15.0	2.70	0.81
37	Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	11.8	28.0	47.8	12.4	2.61	0.85
74	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	19.0	40.2	29.3	11.4	2.33	0.91

way communication with all members of staff and it also had the smallest standard deviation. Parents were more divided on the attraction of additional students to the school than any other item.

Seven items had a mean of 3.00 or less. They were:

#80 Principal involvement in district/area decision-making processes (3.00);

#25 A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members (2.98);

8 Evaluating students against national standards (2.89);

#53 The attraction of additional students to the school (2.88);

#39 Principal maintaining communication with the wider non parent community (2.70);

#37 Principal promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community; and

#74 The principal's social relationship with the teachers outside of working hours.

For three months prior to the research being conducted there had been extensive media coverage by Senator Dawkins for an improvement in the academic standards of students graduating from the various educational systems within Australia. The proposal being tested by him as the spokesperson for the Federal Government on education matters, was for the introduction of nationalized testing of students at certain defined ages. This was not seen by the respondents as a important factor for school effectiveness.

Principal Perceptions on Importance for School Effectiveness

Table 4.2 shows the percentage frequency responses, item means and standard deviation from each mean for seventy nine items in the questionnaire as aggregated from the responses of 84 principals. The means ranged from a high of 3.96 to a low of 2.08 on a four point scale. The highest mean was for the importance of the principal having two

Table 4.2

Principals' Ratings of Importance of School Effectiveness Items
(Sorted According to Mean Value)
(n = 84)

Item #	Item	Importance (%f)				Mean	Standard Deviation
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely		
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	0.0	0.0	3.6	96.4	3.96	0.19
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	0.0	0.0	6.0	94.0	3.94	0.24
16	High student morale	0.0	0.0	10.7	89.3	3.89	0.31
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	0.0	0.0	11.9	88.1	3.88	0.33
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	0.0	0.0	11.9	88.1	3.88	0.33
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	0.0	0.0	12.0	88.0	3.88	0.33
23	High staff morale	0.0	0.0	13.1	86.9	3.87	0.34
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	0.0	0.0	14.3	85.7	3.86	0.35
70	Providing feedback to staff members	0.0	0.0	15.5	84.5	3.85	0.36
85	How important is the principal's effectiveness for attaining overall school effectiveness in a school with students in the CPC-7 range?	0.0	0.0	16.2	83.7	3.84	0.37
75	Maintaining an open school climate	0.0	1.2	14.5	84.3	3.83	0.41
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	0.0	0.0	17.9	82.1	3.82	0.39
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	0.0	0.0	21.4	78.6	3.79	0.41
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	0.0	0.0	21.4	78.6	3.79	0.41
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	0.0	0.0	22.6	77.4	3.77	0.42
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	0.0	1.2	20.5	78.3	3.77	0.45
21	High student satisfaction with the school	0.0	0.0	23.8	76.2	3.76	0.43
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	0.0	0.0	23.8	76.2	3.76	0.43
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	0.0	0.0	23.8	76.2	3.76	0.43
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	3.75	0.44
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	0.0	2.4	20.7	76.8	3.74	0.49
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	0.0	1.2	25.0	73.8	3.73	0.48
17	High expectations of students	0.0	1.2	26.2	72.6	3.71	0.48
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	0.0	0.0	28.6	71.4	3.71	0.45

continued

Item #	Item	Importance (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
22	A student behavior management program	0.0	1.2	27.4	71.4	3.70	0.49
71	Improving the work of staff members	0.0	1.2	27.7	71.1	3.70	0.49
15	Recognition of individuals who have different cultures and values	0.0	0.0	31.0	69.0	3.69	0.47
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	0.0	1.2	28.6	70.2	3.69	0.49
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	0.0	0.0	31.0	69.0	3.69	0.47
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	0.0	0.0	31.0	69.0	3.69	0.47
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	0.0	0.0	32.1	67.9	3.68	0.47
28	Teachers willing to consider change	0.0	1.2	31.0	67.9	3.67	0.50
62	Principal acting as a role model	0.0	0.0	34.5	65.5	3.66	0.48
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	0.0	2.4	31.3	66.3	3.64	0.53
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	0.0	1.2	34.5	64.3	3.63	0.51
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	0.0	0.0	37.3	62.7	3.63	0.49
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	0.0	3.6	31.0	65.5	3.62	0.56
27	Staff keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	0.0	3.6	31.0	65.5	3.62	0.56
65	Principal keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	0.0	1.2	36.9	61.9	3.61	0.52
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	1.2	7.1	22.6	69.0	3.60	0.68
77	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	0.0	3.7	36.6	59.8	3.56	0.57
32	Leadership roles shared among staff	0.0	2.4	40.5	57.1	3.55	0.55
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	1.2	4.8	33.3	60.7	3.54	0.65
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	1.2	6.0	31.0	61.9	3.54	0.67
51	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	0.0	2.4	42.2	55.4	3.53	0.55
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	0.0	3.6	40.5	56.0	3.52	0.57
9	Achievement in language arts is emphasized	0.0	6.0	38.1	56.0	3.50	0.61
82	Principal participation in the selection of professional staff members	1.2	9.8	29.3	59.8	3.48	0.72
43	Gaining of additional resources	0.0	3.6	46.4	50.0	3.46	0.57
68	Supervising the work of professional staff members	1.2	7.1	35.7	56.0	3.46	0.69
50	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	0.0	6.0	45.8	48.2	3.42	0.61
7	Students encouraged to strive for academic success	0.0	6.0	46.4	47.6	3.42	0.61
76	Allocating teachers to classes by the principal	0.0	5.3	48.0	46.7	3.41	0.60
69	Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	0.0	7.1	45.2	47.6	3.41	0.62

continued

Item #	Item	Importance (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
48	Appointment of specialist teachers	1.2	7.1	42.9	48.8	3.39	0.68
25	A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members	2.4	9.5	38.1	50.0	3.36	0.76
5	School goals communicated to students	0.0	13.3	39.8	47.0	3.34	0.70
47	Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	0.0	9.5	47.6	42.9	3.33	0.65
41	Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	0.0	7.1	54.8	38.1	3.31	0.60
40	Identifying the expectations of the parent community	0.0	13.1	46.4	40.5	3.27	0.68
81	The principal's relationship with the SOS	2.4	8.4	50.6	38.6	3.25	0.71
44	Successful fundraising activities within the community	4.8	7.1	47.6	40.5	3.24	0.79
3	A written public plan for achieving school goals	0.0	14.5	48.2	37.3	3.23	0.69
24	Staff with knowledge of new technology	0.0	7.1	64.3	28.6	3.21	0.56
63	Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	0.0	9.5	59.5	31.0	3.21	0.60
67(d)	Two-way channels of communication with wider non parent community	1.2	14.3	47.6	36.9	3.20	0.72
80	Principal involvement in district/area decision making processes	1.2	12.0	54.2	32.5	3.18	0.68
37	Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	0.0	12.0	60.2	27.7	3.16	0.61
13	Coordination of the instructional program so that classes at the same year level do the same work	4.9	12.3	51.9	30.9	3.09	0.79
79	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	2.4	13.4	57.3	26.8	3.09	0.71
4	A written review and evaluation process to monitor progress towards achievement of school goals	2.4	15.7	55.4	26.5	3.06	0.72
52	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	0.0	14.5	65.1	20.5	3.06	0.59
6	Academic subjects emphasized	1.2	17.9	59.5	21.4	3.01	0.67
14	Provision of extra-curricular activities for students	1.2	20.2	57.1	21.4	2.99	0.69
54	The number of students in the school	6.0	14.5	55.4	24.1	2.98	0.80
39	Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	2.4	23.8	60.7	13.1	2.85	0.67
53	The attraction of additional students to your school	14.3	28.6	38.1	19.0	2.62	0.96
74	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	2.4	42.7	47.6	7.3	2.60	0.66
8	Evaluating students against national standards	23.8	48.8	22.6	4.8	2.08	0.81

way communication with all members of staff and this item also had the smallest standard deviation (0.19) of any item. Principals were more divided on the importance of attraction of students to the school, the evaluation of students against national standards and the number of students in a school.

Six items had a mean of 3.00 or less. They were:

#14 Provision of extra curricula activities for students (2.99);
#54 The number of students in the school (2.98);
#39 Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community (2.85);
#53 The attraction of additional students to the school (2.62);
#74 The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours (2.60);
# 8 Evaluating students against national standards (2.08)

From the items with a mean of equal to or less than 3.00, parents and principals agreed that items 39, 53, 74 and 8 were of lesser importance for school effectiveness.

Underlying Dimensions in School Effectiveness

When answering the questionnaire, parents and principals were first asked to rate the importance of an item and then to judge the effectiveness of the school or principal on that item. Table 4.3 shows the item means of both parent and principal responses ranked in decreasing order for the parent means and an * indicates that the item was used in the factor analysis. In Table 4.3 a ***bold italic figure*** indicates a rank order ten or more higher than the ranking given by the other respondent group.

An examination of Table 4.3 indicates that parents rated 10 items significantly higher than principals while principals rated 10 items higher than parents. Of these items the biggest difference in the parent perception to principal perception was the importance placed by parents on item 24, staff with knowledge of new technology. The opposite was

Table 4.3

Rank Order of Parent & Principal Ratings of Important School Effectiveness Items
(Sorted according to parent means)

Item #	Item	Parents Rank Order	Principals Rank Order	
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	1.0	1.0	*
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principaland other members of staff	2.0	2.0	*
16	High student morale	3.5	3.0	*
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	3.5	5.0	*
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	5.5	11.0	*
23	High staff morale	5.5	7.0	*
70	Providing feedback to staff members	7.0	9.0	*
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	9.5	27.5	*
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	9.5	17.0	*
65	Principal keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	9.5	38.0	*
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	9.5	14.5	*
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	12.0	12.5	*
22	A student behavior management program	13.0	24.5	*
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	14.0	5.0	*
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	15.0	30.0	*
21	High student satisfaction with the school	16.0	17.0	*
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	17.0	5.0	*
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	18.0	36.5	*
27	Staff keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	20.0	36.5	*
35	A decision making policy that is in operation	20.0	12.5	*
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	20.0	14.5	*
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	22.0	21.0	*
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	23.5	20.0	*
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	23.5	22.5	*
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	25.0	34.5	*
62	Principal acting as a role model	26.5	32.0	*
24	Staff with knowledge of new technology	26.5	63.5	
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	29.0	42.5	*
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	29.0	8.0	*
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	29.0	45.0	*
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	31.0	34.5	*
28	Teachers willing to consider change	32.5	31.0	*
71	Improving the work of staff members	32.5	24.5	*
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	34.0	17.0	*
43	Gaining of additional resources	36.5	48.5	
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	36.5	19.0	*
5	School goals communicated to students	36.5	56.0	

continued

Item #	Item	Parents Rank Order	Principals Rank Order	
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	36.5	27.5	
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	39.0	33.0	*
82	Principal participation in the selection of professional staff members	40.0	47.0	*
7	Students encouraged to strive for academic success	41.0	50.5	
48	Appointment of specialist teachers	42.5	54.0	
69	Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	42.5	52.5	
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	45.5	39.0	
50	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	45.5	50.5	*
44	Successful fundraising activities within the community	***45.5***	61.0	
75	Maintaining an open school climate	45.5	***10.0***	
52	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	48.0	70.5	*
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	49.0	***27.5***	
6	Academic subjects emphasized	50.5	72.0	*
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of student	50.5	42.5	
81	The principal's relationship with the SOS	52.0	60.0	*
15	Recognition of individuals who have different cultures and values	53.5	27.5	
51	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	53.5	44.0	
47	Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	55.0	57.0	
77	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	56.0	***40.0***	
17	High expectations of students	58.0	***22.5***	
4	A written review and evaluation process to monitor progress towards achievement of school goals	***58.0***	70.5	
63	Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	58.0	63.5	
76	Allocating teachers to classes by the principal	60.0	52.5	
32	Leadership roles shared among staff	61.0	***41.0***	
68	Supervising the work of professional staff members	62.0	***48.5***	
41	Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	63.0	58.0	
9	Achievement in language arts is emphasized	64.0	***46.0***	
3	A written public plan for achieving school goals	65.0	62.0	
13	Coordination of the instructional program so that classes at the same year level do the same work	66.0	68.5	
40	Identifying the expectations of the parent community	67.0	59.0	
14	Provision of extra-curricular activities for students	68.0	73.0	
79	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	69.0	68.5	
54	The number of students in the school	70.0	74.0	
67(d)	Two-way channels of communication with wider non parent community	71.0	65.0	
80	Principal involvement in district/area decision making processes	72.0	66.0	
25	A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members	73.0	***55.0***	
8	Evaluating students against national standards	74.0	78.0	
53	The attraction of additional students to your school	75.0	76.0	
39	Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	76.0	75.0	
37	Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	77.0	67.0	
74	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	78.0	77.0	

* Item used in Factor Analysis

5.0 Number in bold italics indicates ten or more higher in rank order position seen for items 75 and 17. Principals placed much more importance on the maintenance of an open school climate and on the importance of high expectations of students than parents did.

To explore the data gathered in the questionnaire responses to the effectiveness ratings of important items for school effectiveness, the importance items with a mean response rate of 3.50 or greater for both respondent groups, were selected. Parents responded such that 51 items had a mean greater than or equal to 3.50, while there were 46 items in the principal results. The selection process meant that the results from 40 items were used for further analysis. Prior to that analysis a Guttman Split-Half reliability test was performed to ensure that no significant skew had resulted from the selection process used and the results are reported in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4

Reliability Coefficients for School Effectiveness Items Utilized in the Factor Analysis

	Reliability		
	Parents	Principals	Superintendents
40 items	.984	.970	.994

The results indicated that the sample selected had not been skewed from an earlier Guttman Split-Half value calculated using all of the items in the questionnaire (see Table 3.1).

The effectiveness responses for the 40 items obtained by the process described above were factor analyzed using varimax rotation. The purpose of this analysis was to explore the data for underlying patterns of relationships that could be described by a smaller set of factors (Kim & Mueller, 1978, p. 9).

An eight factor solution where the varimax converged in nineteen iterations and accounted for 69.9% of the variance was selected and the results are reported in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5

Eight Factor Solution of School Effectiveness Items

#	Item	Factor #1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
70	Providing feedback to staff members	*.789*	.244	.141	.070	.097	.070	.195	-.082
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	*.777*	.272	.122	.135	.163	-.134	.042	-.001
71	Improving the work of staff members	*.776*	.239	.143	.165	.063	.026	.207	-.002
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	*.762*	.168	.193	.169	.126	.226	.038	-.047
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	*.756*	.163	.259	.096	.121	.200	-.075	-.019
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	*.745*	.296	.095	.068	.050	.072	.077	.297
62	Principal acting as a role model	*.742*	.039	.213	.102	.147	.131	.195	.055
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	*.741*	.112	.257	.111	.124	.311	.039	-.008
65	Principal keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	*.732*	.269	.074	.134	.033	.009	.205	.374
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	*.720*	.247	.056	.188	-.008	.064	.155	.068
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	*.680*	.215	.078	.127	.233	.122	.286	.243
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	*.656*	.067	.045	.154	.330	.064	.169	-.084
75	Maintaining an open school climate	*.656*	.264	.195	.182	.159	.139	.011	-.121
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	*.632*	.202	.368	-.199	.037	.103	-.135	.011
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	*.471*	.385	.236	.276	.350	.250	-.001	-.025
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	.235	*.788*	.148	.017	.124	.117	.047	.141
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	.149	*.740*	.109	-.040	.116	-.012	.282	.072
28	Teachers willing to consider change	.231	*.722*	.173	.157	.138	.206	.057	.019
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	.286	*.714*	.279	.125	.106	.151	.088	-.054
27	Staff keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	.306	*.663*	.138	.146	.077	-.092	.239	.328
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	.248	*.637*	.306	.291	.046	.092	-.117	-.066
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	.298	*.618*	.134	.267	.255	.249	.143	-.173
23	High staff morale	.293	*.481*	.369	.278	.270	.263	-.001	-.229
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	.334	*.399*	.243	.182	.313	.304	.103	-.099

continued

#	Item	Factor							
		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	.138	.249	***.689***	.082	.109	.200	.162	.276
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	.245	.143	***.656***	-.022	.034	.188	.277	.003
22	A student behavior management program	.191	.197	***.608***	.261	.333	-.239	-.006	-.085
21	High student satisfaction with the school	.276	.314	***.600***	.274	.153	.232	.119	-.044
16	High student morale	.225	.272	***.579***	.361	.167	.158	.100	-.048
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	.302	.331	***.519***	.009	.203	.201	.298	.088
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	.134	.100	.126	***.755***	.115	.077	.231	.080
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	.329	.277	.154	***.721***	.085	.077	.109	-.038
42	A school budget developed with all staff and parents	.235	.126	.208	***.500***	.249	.251	-.176	***.457***
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	.150	.235	.203	.080	***.790***	.100	.086	.121
2	Joint principal-staff planning to achieve school goals	.319	.196	.169	.153	***.719***	.122	.074	-.020
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	.226	.239	.226	.110	.115	***.695***	.067	.025
36	Clarifying the educational program to parents	.361	.293	.203	.150	.259	***.458***	.029	.179
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	.292	.198	.365	.136	.023	.057	***.644***	-.055
12	Co-ordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	.267	.241	.147	.200	.099	.370	***.515***	-.027
10	The development of important social skills is emphasized	.224	.176	.380	.254	.186	-.151	***.515***	.117

Each school effectiveness item with its respective loadings on the eight factors is shown in Table 4.5. Factor loadings greater than .400 are identified in bold italic type. Item 35, a decision-making policy that is in operation, loaded with a value of .398 but was maintained in the factor analysis on the basis of its correlation coefficients with the other items within this factor. The correlations ranged from .454 to .609. Item 42, a school budget developed with all staff and parents, loaded for both factors four and eight. The higher loading was for factor four so that solution was accepted.

Prior to continuing with the analysis of the factors generated, a Guttman split-half reliability analysis was performed for the items in each factor. The results are listed in Table 4.6:

Table 4.6

Reliability Coefficients of Items Within each School Effectiveness Factor

Factor	No. of Items	Reliability		
		Parents	Principals	Superintendents
Principal as Nexus	15	.958	.922	.984
Cooperative Improvement Oriented Staff	9	.936	.923	.970
Student Centeredness	6	.889	.801	.899
Facilities and Financial Management	3	.687	.697	.504
Goal Emphasis	2	.761	.655	.893
Parental Support	2	.696	.597	.907
Academic Program Focus	3	.714	.721	.761

Even given the small number of items in some factors, the reliability coefficients ranging from .504 to .984 indicate that a questionnaire containing just the selected items would be "well made [and] standardized" (Downie and Heath, 1965, p. 220).

The seven factors revealed by the factor analysis were named as follows:

Factor 1	Principal as Nexus
Factor 2	Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff
Factor 3	Student Centeredness

Factor 4	Facilities and Financial Management
Factor 5	Goal Emphasis
Factor 6	Parental Support
Factor 7	Academic Program Focus

As Kerlinger (1973, p. 688) indicated, "giving a factor a name does not give it reality. Factor names are simply attempts to epitomize the essence of the factors." The rationale for the labels assigned is described below.

Factor 1: Principal as Nexus

The actions represented by the items in factor one are all associated with activities carried out by the principal. The principal is the connecting link between and among staff, students and the parent community. This connection however is not a passive conduit for ideas, actions or activities to flow through. It requires purposeful interventions by the principal. As the nexus the principal is the concrete that holds the structure together in the required form. Sergiovanni (1984) espoused five levels of forces of leadership for excellence in schooling. The highest, the principal as the cultural leader assumes the role of "high priest seeking to define, strengthen, and articulate those enduring values, beliefs and cultural strands that give a school its unique identity" (p.9). These activities can be seen within this nexus role for the principal. The principal is able to articulate a personal vision for the school (item 61) and communicate it to all. This vision is the basis for the high expectations for staff (item 73) and students. To reinforce these expectations the principal acts as a role model (item 62), learning and growing in the technical areas associated with teaching (items 65, 66); is cooperatively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school (item 64) and fosters the professional growth of individual staff members (item 72). To facilitate this planning for the growth of staff, evaluation and feedback about the performance of their duties is provided for each staff member (items 70, 71). The constancy of the expectations and the two way channels of communication with all parties (items 67 (a), 67(b) and 67 (c)) is a basis for the development of trust (item 34). The focus on growth, constant communication, high expectations, evaluation and feedback for all staff members and the involvement of the principal in the professional aspects of the school assists with the development of an open climate (item 75). The *Principal as Nexus* is the link with the individual community, sensing that environment (item 78) and the environment's impact upon the attainment of the school vision.

Factor 2: Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff

The items within this factor are associated with the staff developing and maintaining their technical competence. Synder (1988, p. 42) indicated

> a school will be only as good as the knowledge base of its leader and staff. In an information-rich age, the school develops its capacity to influence teaching and learning by providing each professional with opportunities to develop expertise and to influence the ways in which that expertise alters work and learning patterns.

Teachers engaged in personal and school focussed professional development activities (items 29, 30) indicates a willingness to change (item 28) and a preparedness to be professionally current (item 27). High "motivation-that which energizes, directs, and sustains behavior" (French, Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985, p. 98) is required to engender commitment to change (item 31, 26), which can be either personally traumatic or energizing. Change is more likely to be energizing when the participants are actively involved in the process and understand and partake in the decisions (item 35) about the direction and nature of that change. Johnson (1988, p. 39) in his dissertation literature review noted that

> survey research by Miskel, Feverly and Stewart (1979) and a review by Conway (1984) disclosed partial support for participative decision-making processes as a source of job satisfaction for teachers, and an Australian study by Gaffney (1983) found satisfaction to be associated with participation in some areas of school decision-making (classroom management, arrangement of school instructional programs and school organization) but not others (curriculum planning and curriculum adaptation).

Job satisfaction (item 33) can also be viewed from the Bennis (1976, p. 167) conception where he maintained that "what gives one satisfaction in one's job. . . above all

[is] the opportunity and capacity to learn." Job satisfaction for the individual staff members can also be considered in light of Locke's definition cited by Gunn and Holdaway (1986, p. 45). "Job satisfaction may be viewed as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing the fulfillment of one's important job values, providing these values are compatible to ones needs." As satisfaction is an affective measure it is important to consider the perceptual nature of it. Perception is culturally based and for an individual depends upon the individual's degree of congruence with the dominant culture of the organization. Taken in the context of the items for this factor it can be seen that the school staff culture focuses on organizational growth, personal development and a commitment to change and supports these items being linked in this factor.

Factor 3: Student Centeredness

Items 18, 19 were associated with the attainment of students and the feedback about that attainment to both the students and their parents. Attainment and progress are important goals for students at school and as such specific feedback is important for their success and satisfaction (item 21). Rewards that acknowledge achievements and efforts (item 20) are important for satisfaction and morale. Hoy and Miskel (1982) remind us that

> administrators attempting to obtain a high morale in a school must be concerned with substantial levels of agreement among bureaucratic expectations, personal needs, and organizational goals. In fact, given the notion of organizational satisfaction, it seems likely that satisfaction is a necessary condition for the achievement of high morale. (p. 68)

Item 22 refers to the bureaucratic expectations of students and the knowledge of these expectations can be seen to add to the security of the students by the removal of ambiguity and uncertainty.

Factor 4: Facilities and Financial Management

The two items, well maintained grounds and facilities and a school internal environment that reflect care and attention to detail, are obviously connected. The second has more of a focus on the environment seen by the students during the larger part of their time at school.

Item 42, a school budget that is developed with staff and parents, is linked with care and attention to facilities. Schools in South Australia are given block operating grants and additional funds for further discretionary expenditure, are raised by parent bodies, and therefore they wish to be involved in the allocation of those funds. The operating grants are the government contribution for all aspects of the schools operation other than the expenses associated with major building alterations and salary costs. Schools can however raise additional funds and become involved in loan schemes for the building of additional facilities such as a gymnasium, canteen or swimming pool. The fundraising efforts can be quite significant. These funds raised, along with the operating grants from the government are used to buy additional classroom equipment, for grounds maintenance and development of playing areas, for library purchases, consumable classroom supplies, minor building alterations and building maintenance and additional technology.

Factor 5: Goal Emphasis

Item 1 in the questionnaire, was one of the questions that required the selection of an option and then the rating of that option. Respondents could select from school goals set cooperatively with: (a) teaching staff, or (b) staff and parents. Irrespective of the choice made there is an obvious connection between item one and item two, joint principal staff planning to achieve school goals. The establishment of school goals is a prerequisite to the planning necessary to achieve them.

Factor 6: Parental Support

Given the move by the South Australian government to increase the involvement of parents in the decision-making processes of school administration, item 38-enlisting support of parent bodies, and item 36-clarification of the educational program to the parents intrinsically mesh together. Parental support would appear to be garnered by a clear understanding of what the school is attempting to achieve for the students through its educational program.

Factor 7: Academic Program Focus

Items 10 and 11 refer to particular curricula aspects of the academic program given high importance by principals and parents. Item 12, co-ordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels, can be seen to link with the two specific academic concerns.

Summary

This chapter presented the individual item means and standard deviations for the responses of principals and parents to the importance of the questionnaire items for school effectiveness. The method for the selection of the 40 most important items for a factor analysis was then discussed. The results of the factor analysis were presented and the process for determining the location of an item that loaded above .400 on more than one factor described. The factors were labeled and the justification for those labels were given. The next chapter proceeds to look more closely at the perceptions of parents with regard to the underlying factors associated with school effectiveness and their rating of schools on these important school effectiveness factors.

CHAPTER 5

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: PARENT PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Parent perceptions of important aspects of school effectiveness and principal effectiveness are firstly reported in this chapter. Discussion then centers on parents' thoughts about who should judge the effectiveness of an individual school. Regression analysis is used to identify the factors parents are most likely to use when judging the overall effectiveness of a principal and school, and finally the relationship between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness is explored.

This chapter specifically addresses the following research questions which in part guided this study:

Question 1. What criteria are reported by parents to be important for assessing the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of schools?

Question 2. How do parents rate the effectiveness of schools on important criteria of effectiveness?

Question 3. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of parents' global ratings of principal effectiveness?

Question 4. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of parents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

Question 5. What is the relationship between parents' global ratings of principal effectiveness and parents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

The presentation in this and the next two chapters is similar. Both quantitative and qualitative data are presented in the three chapters in order to provide a more complete description of numerical findings, to which are added the responses gleaned from the interview data and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire data. This is called for to reveal the difference of opinion which exists within the parent community. All the quotations contained within this chapter are the recorded words of 32 parents interviewed from the September 21st to October 19th. 1988.

Parent Perceptions of School and Principal Effectiveness on Important Factors for School Effectiveness

Question 1. What criteria are reported by parents to be important for assessing the acceptable level of effectiveness and ineffectiveness of primary schools?

On answering the questionnaire, parents were asked to indicate the importance of each item for school effectiveness and to indicate the actual effectiveness of the principal or school on that item. Response categories were "not effective" (1), through "slightly effective," "moderately effective," "highly effective," to "extremely effective" (5).

The quantitative data from the parent questionnaires were analyzed in two ways. Frequency responses and mean scores for the importance of each item rated by the respondents were calculated. These were displayed in Table 4.1 and ranked according to the mean value of responses, highest first. Secondly, as indicated in Chapter 4, the items with a mean value greater than or equal to 3.5 and appearing in both principals' and parents' rankings were extracted. A factor analysis of the resulting 40 most important items was undertaken and results were reported in Table 4.4. A seven-factor solution for items important to school effectiveness was chosen and the results were reported in Chapter 4.

The effectiveness mean score and standard deviation for each of the seven factors for school effectiveness were calculated and are reported in Table 5.1. These are used because in the discussion there is a focus on the seven factors revealed by the factor analysis as being associated with school effectiveness.

The percentage frequencies of parent responses to the effectiveness of principals and schools on each of the 40 items used in the factor analysis are reported in Table 5.2. For the interest of readers the response frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations for all items in the questionnaire are given in Table D.1 and reported in Appendix D. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for all seven factors are given in Table D.2 and reported in Appendix D. All the factors were strongly positively correlated with values ranging from .504 to .734, and all are significant beyond the .001 level. The parent responses in isolation therefore support the validity of the original factor analysis used to ascertain the factors associated with school effectiveness.

Table 5.1

Parent Effectiveness Ratings on the School Effectiveness Factors
(n = 189)

Factor	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Principal as Nexus	3.88	0.83
Facilities and Financial Management	3.87	0.82
Student Centeredness	3.81	0.78
Academic Program Focus	3.81	0.75
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	3.74	0.80
Goal Emphasis	3.64	0.81
Parental Support	3.57	0.93

Principal as Nexus

The information provided in Table 5.1 reveals that the factor *Principal as Nexus* (mean 3.88) was given the highest effectiveness rating by parents. Table 5.2 shows that the mean scores for individual items within this factor ranged from 4.13 for item 66 (Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches) to a low of 3.62 for item 75 (Maintaining an open school climate).

Table 5.2

Parent Effectiveness Ratings of Schools on Important Effectiveness Items
(n = 190)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness(%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 1: Principal as Nexus								
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	2.7	3.7	15.4	34.0	44.1	4.13	0.99
65	Principal keeping up to date with new teaching methods	2.1	3.7	15.5	36.9	41.7	4.12	0.95
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	2.2	4.3	18.3	30.6	44.6	4.11	0.99
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	2.7	7.6	14.1	37.8	37.8	4.01	1.04
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	1.6	4.9	22.4	43.7	27.3	3.90	0.92
70	Providing feedback to staff members	2.7	7.1	20.2	38.8	31.1	3.89	1.02
67(b)	Two way channels of communication with students	4.3	7.1	15.2	42.4	31.0	3.89	1.06
62	Principal acting as a role model	4.3	13.0	13.0	32.4	37.3	3.85	1.18
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	2.7	10.9	19.7	33.3	33.3	3.84	1.09
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	4.3	9.1	21.0	32.8	32.8	3.81	1.12
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	1.6	9.8	20.7	41.8	26.1	3.81	0.99
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	3.3	9.9	19.3	42.0	25.4	3.76	1.05
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	3.8	10.8	22.0	32.8	30.6	3.76	1.12
71	Improving the work of staff members	2.7	8.1	29.2	39.5	20.5	3.67	0.98
75	Maintaining an open school climate	3.4	7.9	31.1	38.4	19.2	3.62	0.99
Factor 2: Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff								
27	Staff keeping up to date with new teaching methods	1.1	3.2	16.0	41.7	38.0	4.12	0.87
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	2.7	9.3	24.0	32.8	31.1	3.80	1.07
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	1.6	9.7	25.3	37.1	26.3	3.77	1.00
23	High staff morale	1.6	10.3	27.2	37.0	23.9	3.71	1.00
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	0.5	7.7	34.4	36.1	21.3	3.70	0.91
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	2.2	9.8	27.3	38.3	22.4	3.69	1.00
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	4.8	12.9	21.0	30.6	30.6	3.69	1.18
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	1.7	10.8	32.4	33.5	21.6	3.63	1.00
28	Teachers willing to consider change	4.3	8.6	33.3	37.6	16.1	3.53	1.00

continued

Table 5.2 (continued)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 3: Student Centeredness								
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	1.6	10.1	17.5	30.2	40.7	3.98	1.06
16	High student morale	1.1	7.0	23.7	40.9	27.4	3.87	0.94
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	3.7	8.5	20.6	31.7	35.4	3.87	1.11
22	A student behavior management program	1.6	10.1	20.7	40.4	27.1	3.81	1.00
21	High student satisfaction with the school	0.5	9.1	28.5	39.8	22.0	3.74	0.92
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	1.6	15.4	23.9	39.4	19.7	3.60	1.02
Factor 4: Facilities and Financial Management								
45	Well-maintained school grounds and facilities	3.2	4.2	21.7	35.4	35.4	3.97	1.02
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	1.6	8.6	20.9	36.9	32.1	3.89	1.01
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	1.1	10.1	29.1	31.7	28.0	3.76	1.01
Factor 5: Goal Emphasis								
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	0.5	6.4	24.5	49.5	19.1	3.80	0.84
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	2.2	11.8	36.0	36.0	14.0	3.48	0.95
Factor 6: Parental Support								
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	2.1	11.2	29.4	31.0	26.2	3.68	1.05
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	3.7	15.4	30.3	31.4	19.1	3.47	1.08
Factor 7: Academic Program Focus								
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	0.0	4.8	27.7	37.2	30.3	3.93	0.88
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	0.5	7.9	27.0	37.0	27.5	3.83	0.94
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program	1.1	11.8	28.0	38.7	20.4	3.66	0.97

The three highest individual item means were for items associated with aspects of change (items 66, 65 and 64). They require the principal to be cognizant of the latest technical-professional knowledge and to be actively involved in the transfer of that knowledge to staff through the curriculum development activities within the school. During interviews, one parent linked the necessity of principal personal development and growth with boundary-spanning activities. The principal must have a sense of what is happening in other schools and in the community. Another parent indicated that principals as part of their learning,

> should go visiting other schools to look in detail at what is going on. They should exchange ideas and be constantly educating and developing themselves. They should be the most knowledgeable in the school but they should also be active within the rest of the community. It is a means of understanding other perspectives and the role of the school within the community. They need to be well informed about what the community is doing, and they should be letting the community know what they are doing.

As well as being sensitive to the community the principal is the spokesperson for the school within the community. This is but one of the channels of communication that the principal must manage.

The next three means of responses within this factor cluster around a focus of the principal with the staff: communicating with them (item 67(a)), maintaining high expectations of them (item 73), and two items tied--providing feedback to them (item 70), and item 67(b)--communicating with students. A member of a School Council saw the effective principal as being not only knowledgeable but also skillful in managing change and staff learning. As one parent indicated, the principal has to

> have a knowledge of how children learn, has to be knowledgeable about current teaching practices and the appropriate curriculum for the school. . . .They need to know how change occurs and how to manage it. . . .To set up the school so that staff are learning and involved in professional development.

To facilitate these activities, the principal must be highly visible, aware of the happenings within the school, and able to gauge weaknesses and plan for appropriate staff learning. A parent explained that the principal

> has to be out and about. He must know the kids and the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. It is by knowing all of the people and knowing what is going on in the classrooms that he knows where the weaknesses are and can then plan to do something about them. You can only find out what the needs of the teachers and children are by being out there.

These issues--visibility, awareness, and planning for staff learning--were addressed by many parents in response to interview questions about (1) the criteria they would use to select the principal of a school, (2) the factors which would inhibit the attainment of maximum school effectiveness, and (3) the suggestions they had for the improvement of schools.

The necessity for the principal to have a high level of interpersonal skills and hence to be able to communicate with all constituencies was frequently commented upon. The following four parent comments were indicative of the responses:

> Make sure that principals all like people. They should have lots and lots of social and communication skills and be able to communicate with the parents, staff, and students before they become principals.
>
> Principals who can relate to the staff with a professional attitude--certainly someone who has two-way communication with the staff, parents, and the students.
>
> Principals must have personality to start with. The fact that they can relate to people right across the spectrum, especially children, is very important. They must also be able to relate to parents effectively and the parents vary in different areas of the city. To be able to relate to head office and dealing satisfactorily at that level is important for the school community.
>
> They need good rapport with the staff, the parents, and the children.

This necessity for interpersonal skills and sensitivity was also addressed by the following two parents. However, both focussed on the principal's awareness of the environment external to the school (item 78). The first indicated a concern about a non-permeable boundary around schools and thought that schools needed

> more open communication, not being such a separate and disparate society, a separate institution. . . . There can be more relaxed exchange between the school and the outside community. . . . Schools are so separate and much of what they do is not relevant to the outside world. We need to relax that barrier and make them more integrated.

The parent thought that the non-use of the valuable resources available from the parents and the wider community inhibited the effectiveness a school could be attain. The second person, the chairperson of a School Council, saw that the interpersonal skills of the principal needed to be matched with a broad base of experience or a high degree of sensitivity to the local community. The principal's sensitivity could make boundary-spanning easier for the parents. This will be discussed further under the factor *Parental Support*. However, the parent thought communities should be able to

> expect them [principals] to be overall people and be able to do all of the things required, to have personalities to get on with every one. . . . Matching them more with the area and the school and its needs is essential. . . . It is not the be-all and end-all but it certainly helps.

In all of these parent responses there was a sense of the *Principal as Nexus*, not just a passive conduit for the flow of information and ideas. The principal was seen as the hub of many of the activities within the school and needed a range of communication skills, an understanding of staff development processes, and the ability to model appropriate behavior. The idea of the principal as nexus, articulating a vision and moving the school towards these goals, was summarized by a parent who said

> I would want to look at the qualifications, people skills, years of experience, previous schools where he had taught. I suppose all the obvious types of things, his approach to change and learning. Once these aspects all check out in a very impressive way, it would then be his attitudes towards education. What he would hope to see each child in his school achieve and how he would arrange things in the school to make sure that each child achieves their full potential irrespective of their ability. If he had that interest at heart, then I would see him as a leader to assist the school.

Summary

Within the factor *Principal as Nexus* there were three main clusters of activities and these were central elements of the culture of the school and parents recognized them as important. The first was the principal as educator, where the principal was viewed as responsible for his/her own personal learning as well as the learning of the other staff members. The second facet was the principal as communicator. In this role the principal should display a high level of interpersonal skills and maintain two-way channels of communication with all constituents. Parents gave great emphasis to this need. The third focus, an extension of the second, was the principal as the person spanning the school boundary and recognizing the uniqueness of the community in which the school is located. Through communication skills and role modelling, the articulation of a school vision would be carried across the organizational boundary. At the same time, the principal must be aware of what is happening in other schools and utilize ideas, where appropriate, for personal learning and the learning of the staff. Parents commented that the involvement and vitality of the principal was a powerful role model for the rest of the staff and had a positive influence on them. This required sensitivity, excellent interpersonal skills, and sound but current professional knowledge.

Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff

The mean for this factor was 3.74, and as Table 5.2 reports, individual item means ranged from 3.53 (item 28) to 4.12 (item 27). For item 27, 79.7% of the parents indicated that teachers were highly or extremely effective at keeping up with new teaching methods; this item had the smallest standard deviation of all the items within the factor. For item 28--teachers willing to consider change--33.3% of the parents responded that the teachers were moderately effective. One wonders if the parents were of the opinion that teachers are willing to change in relation to teaching methods but not in relation to other aspects of the school's operation. This consideration was not explored during the interviews. The various aspects within this factor are discussed below.

Professional Development of Teachers

During the interviews, one parent expressed an opinion that schools could become more effective with an improvement in teacher quality, but this was not echoed by any others. Comments in this area tended to focus on the development of principals. Principals who attended to their own professional development would improve the performance level of the staff in schools, which by implication would mean an increase in the effectiveness of the schools. One parent said that schools can advance with "the improvement of teachers. Once they are there and appointed, there is not a lot that you can do. Only the best should go into and through the system because I feel that they hold one of the most responsible jobs in the community or the country for that matter."

People frequently commented on the necessity for all persons employed within a school to keep their knowledge current. The topic usually arose when parents were responding to an interview question on how schools could become more effective. One parent said, "I suppose a lot of improvement comes down to the standard of staffing: principal and teachers and them improving their skills in various ways. It is rather like other professions; learning what to do is an ongoing thing." Another parent who was the chairperson of a School Council stated, "In all schools there are people who need to get better and the improvement in them will lift the school's performance." As discussed earlier, parents were consistent in expressing the necessity for the principal to keep current with professional and management knowledge. The principal was seen to be responsible for using that knowledge to assist the staff in maintaining their positions as professionally current and competent teachers.

Many parents mentioned the necessity for the system to provide an adequate number of teachers and to ensure that sufficient funds were available for their ongoing professional development. The following comments epitomized the ideas of many of the parents. In this parent's words, "I don't think that there should be a reduction in teacher numbers, but the government should retain adequate funds to run the schools effectively. That includes having sufficient funds for time and money for self-development of the staff."

Job Satisfaction

The idea of the principal giving positive feedback to the staff about their successes was mentioned by parents. This is an aspect of staff satisfaction and can have a positive effect on morale because it builds on the teacher's "sense of accomplishment" (Gunn and Holdaway, 1986) with "the work itself" (Holdaway, 1978). One parent said,

> the principal could do a lot more in how he treats his staff. If you have got a student in the classroom and praise the student's efforts you will achieve a lot more from him or her. Well, teachers need the praise as much as the students. A lot of principals don't do that for the teachers and I think that they need to. The principal can say "Hey, you are doing a fantastic job and I love that over there and that is great." Teachers need that as well.

Some parents felt that the low promotion prospects for many teachers should lead to a consideration of alternate ways of increasing job enrichment. Wherever possible, teacher skills should be used outside of the classroom in the management of the school. The parent saw a part of job enrichment as increased teacher involvement in school management decisions.

Decision Making

All parents were in agreement about the need for a decision-making policy within the school; most saw the need for parental particpation in the decision-making processes of the school's operation. Their thoughts will be explored in Chapter 9, which deals with parent suggestions for the improvement of school effectiveness.

Staff Commitment

Teacher job commitment drew numerous comments with most parents being supportive of staff efforts. One parent said,

> I think that in a good school the principal and staff work together as a team. They are also prepared to go the extra mile and get involved in the extracurricular activities. Camps and excursions are not seen as a chore but rather a great educational experience for the kids. Something to be valued and hence the teachers freely give up their own time.

One parent, when responding to a question about what made her satisfied with the local school, said,

> a variety of things. The obvious dedication of all the staff, from the principal through the teachers and the teachers aides. The results I see with my children. Attempts by staff to improve their teaching ability by way of conferences, further study and the general attitude around the place.

The contrary views--lack of teacher commitment and ineffective teachers--were expressed by two parents when describing the factors that inhibit school effectiveness. The first parent said "A problem is when you get a poor principal or deputy. The leadership is then poor and probably affects the way that the teachers work. Some teachers just go along just for the sake of their pay packet. . . . Also some teachers can't really teach, don't seem to be able to teach. The kids don't seem to learn from them." The second commented, "Come 3.15 p.m., I think that the staff beat the kids out of the school. It is a mass exodus." However, most parents who expressed an opinion in this area saw staff morale, teacher satisfaction, and commitment as a reflection of the principal's approach and activities. One indicated that

> the principal has a big part to play in this, with the whole atmosphere of the place and what they expect out of their staff. If you have a really slack principal --well, some teachers are going to slacken off themselves. The staff and principal need to work as a team. Happy people are going to work better and give the place happy students.

Summary

The factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* has within it nine individual items. The means for these items ranged from 3.53 to 4.12. Parent responses indicated that greater than 53% of them were highly satisfied or extremely satisfied with the effectiveness of the staff. Parents thought that the highest level of effectiveness displayed by staff was with staff "keeping up to date with new teaching methods."

Professional development of the total staff, job satisfaction for staff, staff involvement in decision-making, staff commitment to the school, and staff ongoing personal professional learning were seen as essential. "It is rather like other professions; learning what to do is an ongoing thing." Parents were concerned that the resource allocation by the government should give cognizance to this need and specifically cater to it.

Several parents commented on the necessity of principals giving praise to teachers to enhance the staff's satisfaction. One parent indicated that opportunities for promotion are limited. For this reason, teacher talents should be utilized wherever appropriate in the management of the school. Most parents interviewed agreed that an operational decision-making policy was necessary and saw the need for greater parental particiaption in school decision-making processes.

Nearly all parents were supportive of the efforts made by staff in their commitment to students. Some were of the opinion that if a teacher "came merely for the pay packet," then it was a reflection of the abilities of the principal. The work habits of the principal were a powerful model and they could be reinforced by a high expectation of the staff. Where teachers were seen to "go the extra mile," parents were warm in their praise of them and acknowledged the positive influence these teachers had on their children.

Student Centeredness

The individual item means within the factor, *Student Centeredness* ranged from 3.98 for item 19--Student progress and attainment is reported to parents--to 3.60 for item 18--Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students. In item 18, 17% of the parents rated the schools performance as not effective or only slightly effective. Item 21--Student satisfaction with school--had 61.8% parent response rate in the highly or extremely effective categories. Parents were very vocal about student satisfaction or happiness and about the reporting practices used by schools.

Student Satisfaction and Morale

Student satisfaction or happiness at school received considerable comment and one parent's comments are indicative of many.

> I love it. I think it is fabulous. Everybody cares, the teachers all care about the children and you. All that they want is for the kids to be happy and safe and it shows in the kids because they are happy and safe.

A second parent linked student happiness and learning with the smooth running of the school and staff satisfaction:

> The kids seem to be happy. There seems to be that buzz around that things are happening, learning is occurring, and the school produces results. All the staff seem to get on professionally very well.

When asked how one could judge an effective school, most parents indicated that they would look at the motivation of teachers and the satisfaction level of parents and students. The following is indicative of these responses:

> I would look for a good climate or atmosphere at the school. That, I suppose, would cover the motivation of teachers and students and the satisfaction of students and parents. A happy school, but a happy school with output. You have to be sure that the right meaning is put on the word "happy."

All parents emphasized that they wanted their children to be not only happy at school but also to be productive. However, one parent questioned whether the choice of school, based upon parent perceptions of the quality of an educational program, was valid. Student perception was important, and their happiness with the program and the school needed to be considered. This parent said,

> I think that if the children are happy with their education and that the parents feel that they are getting a balanced education, then it is probably a good school. . . . They are at school for 12 years of their life and they need to be contented during that growing phase. It must also be weighed up with the standards as well of course.

Happiness, however, was not the only consideration. Student outcomes were important. Another parent linked happiness with safety and stated, "My daughter is in a happy and safe classroom and school. She spends eight hours a day there and she has to get on with the other children and the teacher and like it and feel safe there. In general I am sure that she does."

One parent linked her children's happiness with the approachability of persons within the school and said that the school was effective because "you can go up to the school and say that you have a problem and the school is willing to help. We [teacher and parent] then both work out the problem and your kids are not victimized because of it." The victimization of children was a concern to many parents and cited by some as a reason for failing to make contact with a school when an initial worry about some aspect of a school's operation or their child's progress was first felt. Escalation of the level of worry was usually required to overcome this concern and to prompt an approach to the school. Similar to the parent who saw approachability as an indication of effectiveness, another parent saw openness as an indicator of effectiveness and associated the lack of it with an ineffective school. The parent thought that effective schools were concerned and gave attention to parents and their problems:

> I think that when you go into a school and you are confronted with a whole lot of shut doors, it makes you wonder about the place. If you go without an appointment and you are still made welcome and you don't go through a whole process of being shrugged off, then they are concerned for you. If you phone up they listen to you and you are still made to feel welcome. That is further indication of concern for a parent and the problem. It is a genuine concern for you that marks a good school.

This parent felt quite comfortable about being told that the teacher was busy, provided that this was done in a friendly manner and that a suitable time for a future meeting was arranged. The preparedness to make time available for parents was seen as part of the school establishing and maintaining communication between it and the home.

The following comments by one parent, the chairperson of a School Council, were typical of many parents who saw that good communication among principal, staff, students, and parents led to harmony. This was often expressed as "happiness," "satisfaction" or "dedication to the job." A school was seen to be ineffective, when as one parent indicated, there was "a lack of inter-relationships between staff, the students, among the parents or if you have disharmony between the parents and the staff or between staff and the principal." Parents considered student happiness to be vital for school effectiveness, and they saw that an important component of this happiness was the assessment and reporting of student progress to both students and parents. Parents were most willing to comment on their likes and dislikes of the assessing and reporting procedures used by schools.

Student Assessment and Reporting

Monitoring student progress with feedback to both parents and students was an important component of the factor *Student Centeredness*. Parents indicated that the schools were more effective in giving feedback to parents than to students, with 40.7% rating the school as extremely effective. Only 19.7% rated the school as extremely effective in the latter. During the interviews, parents were asked what type of assessing and reporting system they thought should be followed by an effective school. Most thought that a combination of face-to-face interviews and written reports were required, but opinions ranged as to the value of both the format and the quality of the feedback given by the teachers.

Characteristic of the comments supporting parent/teacher interviews were those of a parent who worked as a substitute teacher and voluntary worker at the local school:

> I do a bit of teaching myself. At first I thought maybe I shouldn't bother with parent teacher interviews because I know any way, but I have found there is something else to be gained by attending. . . . I also think that if you have a little inside information you feel more comfortable about approaching the teacher if something does arise that is of concern. You then know the teacher a little bit more personally than Miss or Mrs. so and so. Also the teachers do recognize you as someone who cares enough about your child to be there and so perhaps you are worth a little bit more of their time if you should approach them over some issue.

Because of previous teacher experience, this parent valued parental support of teachers and perceived that teachers were more willing to give time and feedback to concerned parents who supported the interviews being held. This aspect is discussed further under the factor *Parental Support*.

One parent pointed out the time teachers required to adequately report to parents. The person indicated that the issue of assessing students' work and reporting it to both the students and parents was

> not terribly straightforward. Feedback needs to be fairly regular particularly to students of course but also to parents. However, that can be difficult. A lot of parents aren't interested and teachers don't have a lot of time. Many parents express a desire to know how the student is doing compared with other students--while that has disadvantages in that you are comparing students who may not be alike or a group of students and not allowing for individual differences--it is still important to students and teachers. You can not avoid comparisons. There must be a certain amount allowed for comparisons. While the student may be doing fairly well for his ability in an area, if he is below average, parents may wish to assist in that area. Conversely if the student is above average in ability and performance in an area, the parents may wish to know that. The student can be encouraged to make the most of his strengths.

This parent also expressed an opinion about student comparisons in the statements issued by schools to parents. Many parents, particularly if they had children in upper primary school, wanted information about the performance of their child in relation to the norm or how their child performed in relation to other students of that age. Most were not concerned with the child's relative position in the class but wanted a comparison with children of that age range. The most extreme point of view in this area was made by the only parent who wanted examinations for primary students:

> I would like to see the type of assessment as being based more on an examination system, whether it be examination or tests. After all an exam is just a larger test. It should be something that extends the student in a set period of time rather than an assessment of the work that is done at home or over a period of time. That has to come into it too for sure, but I think that kids have to learn that they have to be able to perform in a stressful situation.
>
> Interviewer: How would you want to have those results communicated to you and the student?
>
> I really feel that the best way is straight percentages so that every student knows exactly where they stand.
>
> Interviewer: Do you think competition is an essential part of schooling?
>
> I think that it is an essential part of life in general, and if we don't teach it in schools then it makes it very hard for the students when they leave schools to compete in the world. Life is one big competition once you get outside of the school environment.

This parent continued by talking about competitive leisure activities and competition within the world of work. The person was adamant that schools often ignore the reality of the world and consequently do students a disservice, because the students leave primary school with an unrealistic concept of their own abilities in relation to the abilities of the total population.

All parents commented about the nature of the school-to-home communication of student work and results. Several parents lamented that if a school used written reports only then it was a deficiency because of the one-way nature of the communication. They favoured verbal feedback as well. These parents saw a need for two-way communication focussing on strengths, weaknesses, the attainments of students, and how these elements would impact on the program that would follow. This was succinctly put by one parent:

> When you go up to school you don't want to know that your child is doing good or well. You want to know what they are good at. . . . In written reports I want a bit

> more than percentages and marks. I want to be able to see how much progress the child has made over the year, what difficulties and successes the child has had, what challenges they have overcome--not just in academics but also in social skills, oral work, and an ability to work in a group.

This parent was concerned when written reports came home at the end of a term. It seemed to the parent that this was further evidence that the school did not want to encourage two-way communication. The intervention of holidays before it was possible to see the teacher meant that concerns were put on "the back burner" and not resolved right away. Only if there was further escalation of the concern did action occur.

Approximately one-third of the parents expressed negative feelings about the reporting systems used by their schools. One parent who could not attend scheduled parent-teacher interviews because of work commitments made an effort to communicate with the teacher at other times but felt that the information given was not accurate. The person said:

> I think a lot of school reports you get from a lot of teachers these days are very superficial. They are written but very superficial. You wonder if they know your child. For instance, when my son was in grade one (he is in grade six now), the school that he was attending at the time had prescribed parent interviews. They were usually during the day or when I was committed. So I would drop in from time to time and speak to the teacher a few minutes early or after school and say "Well, how is my son going?" I always got, "Oh yes, he is doing well. He is a good little lad and gets on with his work," etc., etc. His reports were fine, but when he gets to grade 2 we find that he doesn't know a blinkin' thing.

In a similar vein, another parent was of the opinion that teachers were no longer putting the time into reports which was required for the presentation of accurate information specific to each child. "Time after time they read exactly the same. Once upon a time they sat down and thought about their reports, but that takes time and a lot of teachers don't allow that sort of time in their schedule." Another parent thought that for real value to be gained from a written report, it was necessary to know the teacher and approach her/him personally. "I feel that in the present report twice a year, teachers are not quite patronizing but you have got to read between the lines. I think personally a lot of assessment is knowing your child's teacher." Parents frequently expressed the hope that if there was a problem with their child that the teacher would approach them about the matter. The surety with which they expressed this opinion seemed to be a reflection of their general impressions about the school. If they were generally positive during the interview, then they thought that this would occur. Those who expressed reservations about going to the school were not so assured of any action taking place until the matter had become quite serious. This links with perceptions of how easy it is to cross the boundaries of the school. As indicated earlier, most parents placed an emphasis on the approachability of persons at the school.

Many parents interviewed indicated that they did not receive information that was specific. This feeling was also expressed by parents about initial information that they were given at a school, when making an intervention at the school. This matter is discussed in Chapter 10. The following is indicative of the opinions expressed by other parents. The parent lamented the restrictive nature of the allocated time for scheduled interviews and indicated that subsequent follow-up depended very much upon the individual teacher:

> The reports that I was getting for both my kids at this stage was that they lacked confidence, making some progress, those sorts of things. They were generalities. They never said or identified a problem, never specified a problem, and never gave any indication of what would happen. It was always back on the child and dwelt very much on characteristics, such as lacked confidence, could do better, could try harder, etc., and never provided an alternative strategy that they might implement to improve the situation. Never offered an alternative. No actions stated or what the teacher would do about it.
>
> Interviewer: This was with the written reports. Did the teacher ever offer concrete strategies and specific feedback at parent/teacher interviews?
>
> The interviews are useless. They are for ten minutes. When I do ask some specific questions, well the time is gone and the next people are lined up at the door. You don't have the time for the teacher to elaborate on the points stated. No meaningful discussion is possible.

This parent indicated that if one was able to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss concerns in greater depth, "then it depends on the teacher. Some use it [the follow-up interview] to advantage; some seem to feel you are intruding on their time." Parents were consistent in expressing their desire for accurate, specific information about their children coupled with a clear indication of what was planned when remedial action was indicated.

One parent against the short parent/teacher interview proposed a variety of strategies for meaningful feedback to parents about student performance:

> Well, I would definitely say that it would have to be more than one interview a year. For effective feedback from the school to the parents and from the parents to the school I would suggest needs at least four interviews, with the minimum of half an hour available. There should be sort of a take-home book to say we have done money in Maths this week or month, so that at home you know what your child has done and how you can assist them. Another way is to have parent/teacher nights where the work that the children have been doing is set out, methods are explained, curriculum is explained to the lay parent so that they understand. This would indicate that effort is genuinely being made to inform the parent about what is going on in the classroom and how their individual child reacts to the methods being used. . . . There seems to be a wall between parents and teachers that you can't get through.

Quite a few parents mentioned that they liked to see children's work sent home. This was expressed more strongly by parents with younger children. One parent proposed the concept of photos or videos of classroom activities being sent home as assessment and reporting tools. This has innate appeal, and the ready availability of video technology makes it quite feasible for classroom teachers. The parent said, "I love getting photographs home from the school that show the children and their activities. I would love to see a video or something. I just love watching her [the child] when she doesn't know I am watching her."

Parents were consistent in their desire to have detailed, specific information about their children's progress, but there was lack of consensus about the value of written reports as opposed to parent/teacher interviews. This was demonstrated in the comments made by the following couple during a joint interview:

> Male: I think that there has to be written reports, in fact more of them.
> Female: No, I think that parent/teacher interviews are good.
> Male: I think that the written report should be each term so that you get a chance to work out if there is a problem in one place before it goes too far. A kid could sit there for two years bluffing their way through it.
> Female: I disagree, because I think the teacher would detect it and hopefully let you know that your child was having a problem.

Summary.

Parents were most willing to comment on the assessing and reporting procedures used by schools. All parents wanted detailed, specific feedback about the progress of their child and an indication of what actions the teacher planned to take to enhance student performance or to rectify learning problems. Approximately one-third of the parents expressed negative feelings about the assessing and reporting system used by schools, and some queried the time and effort teachers put into the process and the accuracy of the information being supplied to them. Opinions were divided about the value of interviews as against written reports.

Student Behavior Management

The behavior of students and their happiness was of considerable concern to parents. One parent indicated that the most important thing,

> from my point of view, is possibly the behavior of the children, the way that they present themselves. Are they happy-go-lucky children coming out or do they tend to slouch around and hang around in sullen groups? That sort of thing. It is as if they seem relaxed but have had a busy day. The human environment part plays just as an important part as the scholastic achievement in the children's education.

Several parents indicated the steps they took to gauge that behavior, and one parent thought the play of children in the yard was an easy way for judgements to be made. Play was observable by people walking past the school or to a parent walking to a child's classroom during one of the breaks. Another parent indicated that he/she judged a school by the behavior of the children in the yard: "I judge it by walking across the quad during the lunch time and hearing the way the children speak to each other and talk, what the language is like, and if they are courteous to each other, things like that." Several parents thought that effectiveness could also be judged on the basis of the children's language and their cooperation with each other. In the words of one parent, "If you walk into the playground and see the children cooperating with each other, you don't see kids yelling and screaming abuse at each other when they are playing competitive games, then it is a good school."

One parent, a chairperson of a School Council, indicated that discipline would be one of the factors that would be used to select an appropriate school at which to enrol their children. The discipline approach used was tied to the feelings that teachers have about children, and many parents thought teachers' philosophies were displayed in the operating practice of the school. A parent indicated that when choosing a school,

> I would use the friendliness of the staff, their philosophies and how they feel about the children, their attitude towards discipline, their attitude towards the classroom management. I don't feel I have any worries with Ivy learning to read and write or with the academic skills. I am more concerned that she have really positive relationships with other children and adults.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean by discipline?
>
> I really like the approach where the children are encouraged to develop their own sense of responsibility.

School rules were seen as important, and parents were concerned about the level of innate fairness within the rules. They mentioned the need for rules but few could give any examples of what rules were necessary other than rules ensuring the safety of their children.

Staff, student, and parent respect for each other were frequently linked to the discipline strategies used by the school:

> I would go on the principal's attitude to me when I had a chat with him, also his attitude that he conveyed about his staff. What do staff think of him, what he thinks of the kids there. The children's respect for the principal counts a lot along with the discipline of the school.

The principal was seen as the key figure, the role model for generating the ethos of the discipline policy used by the school. One parent said, "I think that discipline is very important. If the discipline in the school is good, it comes down from the principal." Many parents saw a student behavior management program as inextricably linked to the child's concept of self-worth and the worth of others. It was an attitude that was modelled by the staff to the students. The following comments by a parent summarized this view:

> I really always liked the way the emphasis here has been on the feelings of personal worth and talking things out, thinking things out and working them out logically. It is lovely. Therefore for me the discipline is displayed in the way the staff are relaxed with each other and can talk very easily about what they believe in.

Summary

Student satisfaction and morale were usually equated with student happiness at school and a willingness by the student to go to school. As one parent indicated, an unhappy child can "keep getting those mysterious stomach aches, headaches, or anything else." Associated with happiness within the school as displayed by the staff, students, and parents was a concern for the safety of the children. This encompassed personal physical safety, social security, and mental equanimity. A reduction in the level of any of these three aspects quickly energized parents to intervene at the school. This is discussed under parent intervention in Chapter 9.

The assessing and reporting processes used by schools produced a large dossier of parental comment. Approximately one-third of the parents interviewed had negative feelings about this aspect of the operation of the school their children attended. Parents wanted accurate, specific feedback whether it was presented at an interview or in a written report. Many parents felt that feedback lacked specificity and failed to give an indication of how remedial action would be taken or student extension would occur. Consensus about reporting format did not appear possible. Verbal, written, or a combination of both seemed to have an approximately equal number of proponents.

Many parents who expressed satisfaction with the reporting and assessing procedures of the school linked their satisfaction to the individual staff that their children had as teachers. These teachers were seen to be concerned, considerate, and very approachable by both the student and the parents.

Facilities and Financial Management

Facilities and Financial Management (mean 3.87 on a five-point scale) was one school effectiveness factor cited by many parents as important if they were to choose between two schools for their children to attend. One parent commented, "Well, aesthetically you must have a nice environment. It is no good going into a school that is falling down, where the grass is never cut and the cold water fountain is not working." The attractiveness of the school was linked to the parents' perceptions of the impact it had on the learning of the children In that parent's words, "If children are happy in the environment, it will enhance the learning process. They will want to go to school for a start." Another parent cited the external physical environment as the first filter in the decision-making process about school choice. Following this, an impression of the internal environment would then be gauged:

> I would look at the environment, the buildings, the grounds, looking for things like shade, lawns or all asphalt, playground equipment. After that, to get a leg in, I would go and talk to the principal and get him to walk me around the school. I would be watching for the way the kids talked to him, what the rooms looked like in terms of an educational environment --color and kids' work displayed. I would take notice of the atmosphere in the classrooms and the rapport between teachers, students, and the principal.

One parent saw the environment as an indicator of other important aspects. "You want to make sure that the school was reasonably equipped and . . . the maintenance should reflect care and concern." A parent who had recently chosen a school indicated that environment was one of the determinants of that choice:

> We have the choice of four primary schools near here. I went and visited each of the four schools. I had a look at their curriculum, the school yard, the classroom environment, the staff, facilities, and principal. The one that they are at is the best of the four choices.

Financial management was one of the items within this factor, and the budgetary determination processes of the schools were such that 90% of the parents indicated that the schools were moderately effective or better. In question 59 of the questionnaire--"What three key factors currently stop the school your child/children attend from achieving maximum effectiveness?"--50 of the responses indicated that the government financial processes and cash allocation methods were contributing to the prevention of maximum effectiveness. Government cutbacks on the provision of staff and the resultant increase in class size were cited by 83 parents as inhibitory to the attainment of school effectiveness. Lack of finance for building alterations and repairs was perceived by 21 parents to be a factor contributing to the lack of school effectiveness.

Summary

Parents indicated that the external environment depicted an impression of the school. One sought to gauge the level of care and attention given to the children from the care and attention given to the grounds and buildings. The internal environment where children spend much of their day provided messages about the program. Does the decor indicate the warmth, vitality, and creative activities of the children, or is it cold and sterile?

The budgetary processes of the school were important to parents and will receive attention in the section that discusses parental particiaption. Parents were critical of government cash allocation processes to the schools and of the cutbacks of staff to schools.

Goal Emphasis

The mean for this factor, *Goal Emphasis*, was 3.64 with a standard deviation of .81. The individual items within the factor received a smaller percentage of extremely effective responses than any other items in all other factors.

Item 1--school goals should be set cooperatively with (a) teaching staff or (b) staff and parents--required a choice of alternatives. Respondent selections are reported in Table 5.3

Of the respondents, 18.1% chose teaching staff as the goal-setting group, while 81.9% thought that staff and parents should be involved in setting the goals for the school. Irrespective of the group chosen, there is no apparent difference in the distribution of the effectiveness responses.

Item two--joint principal/staff planning to accomplish school goals--received 19.1% of parent responses in the extremely effective category and 49.5% of responses in the highly effective category. One parent stated a contrary view during the interviews and indicated that the school had no real focus for its activities. "At the moment the school is just coasting along. There are no highlights. We have no specialist sport, music, or language teachers, just class rooms with nothing different or special providing a focus that makes the school a unique place." However most parents, when expressing thoughts about the achievement of a common purpose for the school, indicated "team work" was required if the purpose was to become a reality. One parent said that in looking to see if a school was effective, "I would look for team work--how staff interact and get on together and how they all work towards the same goal and do the best for the kids." A parent asked for any concluding comments stated, "I think that the main thing I have said 99 times is the importance of the parents, principal, and staff working together for the same purpose, for the benefit of the children." The utilization of team work in achieving major goals was frequently mentioned by parents. Most saw that the team was composed of principal, staff, students, and parents. It was thought generally that the responsibility for the generation of

Table 5.3

Cross Tabulation of School Goal-Setting Group with Effectiveness of Goal Setting

School goals should be set cooperatively with:	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Highly Effective	Extremely Effective	Row Total
			(% frequency)			
(a) Teaching staff	0.0	3.2	32.3	51.6	12.9	18.1
(b) Staff and parents	2.1	12.1	37.9	33.6	14.3	81.9
Column Total	1.8	10.5	36.8	36.8	14.0	100

a team approach to the pursuit of goals was a responsibility of the principal. One parent said:

> It is important that the person you have at the top be seen to be effective. That the person be seen to be caring, doing the best they can to liaise--so providing that essential continuity, keeping every thing together, keeping it harmonious, having the team of staff and parents working together.

The ability of principals to engender the team approach for goal achievement was seen as an indicator of their role effectiveness. In the words of one parent, "For the principal to be effective he must have the support of the school council, support of the staff, and have all of them working to the same ends; but he must be dynamic and involve the staff and then ensure that they carry things through." Another parent suggested that the ability to generate team work would be a criterion to use in the selection of a principal for the school. The parent said "What goals he [the principal] would hope to see each child in his school achieve and how he would arrange things in the school to get there and how he would get the team to get there, would be vital." Parents consistently commented about the need for a school focus or sense of purpose. Many wanted clear statements about what could be expected in terms of student achievement. One parent expressed the feelings of many by saying,

> From beginning to end you need to have a clear precise objective of what the student is going to achieve right from the word go to their conclusion at the school. . . . It seems very difficult to get that from the whole school. They can give you broad spectrum but not specifics.

Summary

Parents perceived that the schools were less effective in their efforts for the factor, *Goal Emphasis* than in all other factors other than *Parental Support*. Irrespective of whether parents indicated that goals should be set with staff or with staff and parents, their responses did not significantly change the effectiveness ratings they gave to the school.

Generally parents were of the opinion that it was the principal's responsibility to engender team work for the achievement of school goals and to ensure that the goals were being pursued. This was often cited as an indicator of the effectiveness of the principal. The idea that through team efforts major achievements were possible was frequently expressed. Parents, staff, principal, and students were seen by parents as team members.

Parental Support

This factor had an overall mean of 3.575 with a standard deviation of .932. The individual items were such that a greater percentage of parents rated their school's performance slightly effective or not effective on item 36--clarifying the educational program to the parents--than for all other items within the seven factors. This links with the earlier concerns expressed about the need for clear statements of what could be expected from the school in terms of student achievement.

Parent support was usually seen as synonymous with parental participation. Most parents were aware of the Education Department of South Australia's recent policy on parental participation and expressed an opinion about it. One parent, lamenting the lack of parental involvement at her/his school said "There should also be a lot more parental involvement, a lot more meetings and opportunities for parents to have a say. Like the Education Department has put out this policy--let's all meet and discuss it if any one is interested and see what ideas we can come up with." Another parent indicated, "I personally feel that it is very important. The decision-making processes are something that have to be qualified with the current parent participation policy." Many parents thought that the moves by the Education Department to increase the level of parental participation depended on

> the individual school and the individual principal and staff as to how far they want parental involvement. . . . Genuine participation or is it limited to operating the canteen, organizing school discos? Anything that keeps the parents out of the school and the school's hair? . . . So I put a lot of parent participation back onto the principal's attitude.

One parent, when speaking about the rejection of parents indicated how on behalf of a group of parents, an offer had been made to assist the school with the production of teaching aides. The principal's response was, "Well most of the parents in this area can't spell correctly so they would be useless." The parent indicated that "when you are up against that type of attitude, it is difficult to move." Some parents thought that mixed messages were frequently given by schools. Parent participation was verbalized, but the responses of the school to parental input sometimes gave the parents the impression that their input was not valued.

The involvement and support of parents was seen as a reaction to how welcome the parents were made to feel and how their input was valued by staff. One parent indicated that this was critical to increasing parental involvement:

> I think parental involvement is vital. If there is parental involvement available and encouraged, then parents have really got nothing to complain about. There are certainly parents that want to be involved, but they also have to feel welcome and feel that their suggestions will at least be considered and taken seriously. Participation must be a two-way thing. You need people who wish to be involved and you need staff who will accept them.

Another parent active within the Parent and Friends Club, when discussing the negative "vibes" felt as a parent assisting at the school, indicated that "parent bodies are important. If parents are involved it has got to be better for the school, better for the parents as well. It encourages communication. If they are involved, they know what is happening and it makes them feel good about it." Parents expressed a degree of frustration about rejection of their involvement and their desire for increased participation.

Parents wanted to raise their presence in the schools from involvement to more active participation. Most parents expressed a degree of concern about parental participation in the decision-making processes about curriculum issues. Most thought the parents should be consulted about the broad thrusts and directions. The detailed decision could be left to the professionals who should have the knowledge. A response that summarized this opinion follows: "I think that a parent has to place a lot of trust in the competence of the teachers to deal with the curriculum issues." This was reinforced by the parent who said,

> There are some decisions that must be left to the staff because a lot of us parents think we know and don't know. We haven't got the professional know how to make a lot

> of decisions, but there again parents should be given the opportunity to be able to make decisions through School Council. . . . Parents roughly know what they want but not the fine details. That is the responsibility of the trained staff.

Parents want to be involved and have an input at the curriculum level, but the level of input thought appropriate was varied. Many were of the opinion that discussions of broad curriculum guidelines were appropriate areas for parental participation but the fine operational details should be left to the professional staff. One parent wondered if concerns about parental participation in curriculum issues caused the schools to think "we are the enemy sort of thing." All parents saw the positive aspects of participation and saw that there were many areas in which they could participate meaningfully. Hence they found the off-putting messages from some schools hard to handle.

Summary

A greater percentage of parents gave schools a not effective or slightly effective response in the area of clarifying the educational program to parents than in any other item in all seven factors. Parents were in agreement about the need to have parental participation in their schools. They saw it as a benefit in maximizing the teamwork approach considered so important in the factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff*. Many articulated the opinion that the degree of parental participation was dictated by the attitude of the principal and staff. If parents perceived that their input was valued, then they would respond accordingly and the level of participation would increase. Some parents asserted their indecisiveness about the degree of parental participation appropriate in specific curriculum issues. These people were of the opinion that parents had the right to be involved in the broad policy areas but that the specific details of content, implementation, and teaching methodology were best left to those with the professional knowledge--trained staff.

Academic Program Focus

Contrary to some of the research on effective schools (Edmonds, 1979, p. 20) parents gave the items focussing on the development of social skills and student creativity greater importance than the items with a focus on academic attainment (see items 6, 7, 10 and 11 in Table 4.1). The development of student creativity was rated moderately effective or better by 91.5% of the parents and 95.2% of the parents rated the development of social skills the same way. Comments from parents included the following:

> If they can read and write, talk, add up, have reasonable manners, then they must be getting some form of education. Don't get me wrong. I don't think education is yuck, but what I am saying is that school is not just to learn to read and write and all of the rest of it. It is to be able to mix socially and to respect others.
>
> The emphasis here has been on the feelings of personal worth and talking things out, thinking things out and working them out logically. It is lovely. . . .Also if you walk into the playground and see the children cooperating with each other, you don't see kids yelling and screaming abuse at each other when they are playing competitive games, then it is a good school.
>
> I would like to see schools spend a little bit more time in preparing the students as people. Getting the children to bring out the best in themselves. . . how they themselves can learn to do something, handle a problem, or solve a problem by themselves.

Summary

Social skills and the social interaction level of their children with other children and their teachers were of concern to parents. This aspect of the program was judged to be more important than an emphasis on academic subjects and more important than encouraging students to strive for academic success. Schools were also more effective in the attention given to development of important social skills (effectiveness mean 3.93 on a five-point scale) than to their emphasis on academic subjects (effectiveness mean 3.37 on a five-point scale), or to encouraging students to strive for academic success (effectiveness mean 3.44 on a five point scale). Poor social interaction with peers or teachers was one aspect of a child's education that prompted parents to intervene at the school. Parent interventions at the school are covered in Chapter 10.

Assessing School Effectiveness

Question 58 of the questionnaire asked parents, "Who is the best person/group to judge the effectiveness of the school?" The responses are reported in Table 5.4.

Parents identified 13 groups suitable to judge the effectiveness of a school. Parents themselves are featured in seven of the groups, and these groups accounted for 79% of the total responses. Two percent of the parents indicated that superintendents should judge the effectiveness of the school while 5% of the respondents thought it should be the principal. Staff were involved in four groups selected by 38% of the parents. Suggestions for the composition of the independent group included teachers from the secondary schools who received the graduates of the primary school, a person or group from the Area Office, and employers and prominent local citizens.

Table 5.4

Parent Preferences Concerning Groups Able to Judge the Effectiveness of an Individual School

Group	Frequency
Parents	48
Parents and Independent Group	4
Parents and Staff	37
Parents, Staff, and Independent Group	18
Parents and Students	9
School Council	27
School Council and Parents	1
Staff and Students	7
Staff	7
Principal	9
Superintendent	4
Independent Group	8
Student Results	3
	182

The ratings that parent respondents to the questionnaire gave to the global effectiveness of the school their child/children attended and to the principal of that school are reported in Table 5.5 below.

It can be seen that 70% of the parents rated the school as highly or extremely effective, while 72% of them rated the principal as either highly or extremely effective. Parents also indicated that 10% of principals were not slightly or not effective. The next section of this chapter looks at what factors parents may use to judge the overall effectiveness of a principal.

Table 5.5

Parent Ratings of Global Principal Effectiveness and Global School Effectiveness (n = 190)

Item #	**Item**	Effectiveness(%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
57	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of your school	0.0	2.7	26.9	42.3	28.0	3.52	0.68
83	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of the principal of the school your child/children attend	3.2	6.5	18.8	37.1	34.4	3.93	1.04

Predictors of Overall Principal Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to provide information to answer the following research question posed at the commencement of this study:

Question 3. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of parents' global ratings of principal effectiveness?

The approach adopted to answer this question was to use stepwise multiple regression analysis of the questionnaire data. A summary of the regression analysis of the most important set of predictor variables for the overall variance in principal effectiveness is provided in Table 5.6.

The best predictor of overall principal effectiveness was the factor *Principal as Nexus*. This factor accounted for 67.8% of the variance in overall global principal effectiveness. This aspect in combination with the next two factors--*Facilities and Financial Management* and *Student Centeredness*--accounted for 69.4% of the variance. These two factors only added 1.6% to the total variance, but they had significant Pearson correlation coefficients of .405 and .543 with the variable, principal global effectiveness.

Table 5.6

Predictors of Global Principal Effectiveness as Assessed by Parents
(n=190)

Predictor in order of entry to the Regression Analysis	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change	Simple R	Beta
Principal as Nexus	0.823	0.678	0.678	0.823	0.823
Facilities and Financial Management	0.828	0.686	0.008	0.405	-0.111
Student Centeredness	0.833	0.694	0.008	0.543	0.123

In the interviews, parents were in almost total agreement that principal effectiveness was very highly positively correlated with school effectiveness. The quality of the principals and their level of involvement with many facets of school activities were seen as crucial to school effectiveness. Apart from the principal, parents frequently mentioned the standard of the school's physical plant when making a choice of a school for their children. Comments were made about the need for the external environment to be enticing for the children. The necessity of internal aspects of the school being places where the children had a sense of belonging and pride was important to many parents. The process of setting a school budget, the third aspect of the factor *Facilities and Financial Management* , was seen as a integral part of meaningful parental participation in the running of the school. However, it was recognized that the attitude of the principal and the staff dictated the degree of that participation. If the principal and staff displayed through their actions and responses that parental input was valued, then parental activity escalated.

Student Centeredness was frequently mentioned by parents, and student happiness was central to their concern. Nonetheless they indicated that happiness must be accompanied with productive outcomes. The next major facet *Student Centeredness* was the assessing and reporting procedures used by schools. Approximately one-third of parents had some negative comment to make about this area. Parents wanted accurate, specific feedback about a child's performance. Their level of concern about the reporting and assessing practices of schools supports the statistical inclusion of this factor, *Student Centeredness*, in the regression analysis.

Predictors of Overall School Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to provide information to answer the following research question:

Question 4. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of parent global ratings of school effectiveness?

The approach adopted was to use a stepwise multiple regression analysis of the questionnaire data. A summary of the regression analysis of the most important set of predictor variables for the overall variance in global school effectiveness is provided in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7

Predictors of Global School Effectiveness as Assessed by Parents
(n=190)

Predictor in order of entry to the Regression Analysis	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change	Simple R	Beta
Student Centeredness	0.628	0.395	0.395	0.629	0.628
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	0.664	0.440	0.046	0.605	0.313
Facilities and Financial Management	0.682	0.466	0.026	-0.020	0.206
Goal Emphasis	0.694	0.481	0.015	0.529	0.160

The best predictor of overall school effectiveness was the *Student Centeredness* factor. This factor accounted for 39.5% of the variance in overall global school effectiveness. This aspect combined with the next three factors--*Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff;*

Facilities and Financial Management; Goal Emphasis--accounted for 48.1% of the total variance. The three additional factors supplied an increase of 8.6% in the overall variance and had significant correlation coefficients, ranging from .411 to .629, with the variable overall global school effectiveness. During the interviews, parents were asked to comment on factors associated with school effectiveness. The *Student Centeredness* factor was the topic of considerable verbal input, and the information articulated supported the regression analysis.

Central to the factor *Student Centeredness* was parental concern for the satisfaction and morale of their children. This was usually expressed as "happiness." The next major issue within the factor was the assessing and reporting procedures used by the school. Parents wanted accurate specific feedback about the performance of their children. Parents were of the opinion that failure to provide this to the child could lead to a reduction in the child's level of attainment.

The factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* was important to parents because of their perceptions of the importance of the interactions between student and teacher. The quality of this interaction had a bearing on the attainment and happiness of the students. The level of learning by the teachers, both as individuals and as a total school unit, affected this relationship. Parents expected the best teachers for their children; encompassed within this was the idea of teachers maintaining current professional knowledge and a commitment to the activities of the school. The job satisfaction of the staff was related to their level of happiness and as iterated by a parent, "Happy people are going to work better and give the place happy students."

Relationship Between Principal Effectiveness and School Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to provide information in relation to the following research question which in part guided this study:

Question 5. What is the relationship between parents' global ratings of principal effectiveness and parents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

The variables "overall principal effectiveness" and "overall school effectiveness" had a Pearson correlation coefficient of .507. This value demonstrated a positive correlation between the two variables. Parent opinion expressed during the interviews suggested that they thought there was a stronger relationship between the variables than this figure, calculated from questionnaire responses, indicated.

Parents were almost unanimous in their opinions that without an effective principal there could not be an effective school. Some indicated they had known of good schools but that the gloss did not remain for very long if a good principal did not get appointed to the school. In the words of several parents "The principal is the whole hub of the wheel and if he is not effective then the school will be really struggling to be effective. Without a good principal the school will struggle to make three or four out of ten." The principal was seen as "the role model for every one to look up to. If he is an ineffective principal, disaster looms." When one judges a school, "you tend to look at who ever is at the top of the tree as to how they hold the rest of it together." One parent who had moved several times while his/her children were at primary school said that their level of satisfaction with the school "has varied from definitely to only moderately satisfied. It is solely determined by the principal. He either brings out the best in the staff, motivates them and keeps the school going ahead, or it stagnates and the gloss goes off." It was indicated by parents that "many statements about the school are really statements about the principal." The principal was "very important because everything that the school reflects ultimately comes back on the principal's head. I mean the school is seen as an outgoing of what ever the principal does or does not do."

One parent indicated that the importance of the principal was brought home with the recent appointment of another principal to the school. "We had a principal that we thought was very good until we got a new principal, and the difference in the school is tremendous.

The principal is the most important person in the school." The parent said that the new person was more dynamic, visible, and involved in all aspects of the school's operation:

> The children come home and talk about him a lot. They get excited about the things that they are doing, whereas before I would say, "What did you do at school today?" and they would say, "I don't know." However, they now know and can talk about it. You can see the principal involved not only with the teachers but with the children and the parents as well.

The principal's involvement had a large part to play in the whole atmosphere of the place. "If you have a principal who is not prepared to become involved with the staff, with the students, with the parents, then you don't have an effective school." Parents thought that if the principal was effective, then the school would be effective and the children would benefit. Judgement of an effective school according to one parent could be based on looking at "how the teachers get on, how motivated they are, and what the work output is like. I mean if the principal is effective, the education of the kids will be effective because the educators, the teachers, are happy." This sentiment was reiterated by a parent who indicated that the atmosphere of the school was important for effectiveness. Parents generally thought the atmosphere within a school was largely determined by the principal.

Summary

The principal was seen by parents as the hub of the school. It was their perception that a good school invariably had a good principal. Many statements about the school were invariably statements about the principal. It was through the activities of the principal in the multiple facets of the school's operation that a positive climate developed. This encouraged staff to be involved, to grow both personally and professionally, and to be happy with their classroom teaching responsibilities. In turn this was considered important because it impacted upon the happiness of the children. Children coming home from school satisfied with their activities and the progress they were attaining definitely influenced the home environment.

Chapter Summary

Parent responses to the effectiveness of schools and principals were such that all items in each factor had more than 50% of the parents rating the performance of the principal or school as "highly effective" or "extremely effective." The item "staff keeping up to date with new teaching methods" had more "highly effective" or "extremely effective" ratings (79.7%) than any other item. At the other end of the continuum of responses, a greater percentage of parents gave schools a "not effective" or "slightly effective" response in the area of clarifying the educational program to parents than to any other item in all factors.

The best predictors for the global principal effectiveness variable were the factors *Principal as Nexus*, *Facilities and Financial Management*, and *Student Centeredness*. These factors in combination accounted for 69.4% of the variance.

Within the factor *Principal as Nexus*, there were three main clusters of activities and these are central elements of the culture of the school. The first was principal as educator responsible for his or her own learning as well as the learning of the staff. The approach of principals to their own learning was a powerful role model for staff and indicated the importance principals placed on the learning of all of the adults within the school. The second focus was the principal as communicator. The principal was expected to have a very high level of interpersonal skills and to be able to use these skills appropriately with a range of constituents and organizations. Parents gave great emphasis to this range of interpersonal skills. The third focus, which was an extension of the second, required principals to span the boundaries of the school, recognizing the uniqueness of the community in which the school was located and acting as the school spokesperson within that community. Once again the principal's approachability was of importance if this boundary spanning was to be done effectively. Parents frequently commented that the principal was a powerful role model for the rest of the school and could have a positive effect on the school and the approachability of all persons within the school. This required from principals sensitivity, excellent interpersonal skills, a sound but current professional knowledge, and the ability to get team members to coalesce for the pursuit of the achievement of school goals.

The best predictors of the global school effectiveness variable were the factors *Student Centeredness, Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff, Facilities and Financial Management*, and *Goal Emphasis*, they collectively accounted for 48.1% of the variance.

Parents were most willing to give opinions about the factor *Student Centeredness*. Of major concern to them was student satisfaction and morale. This was usually referred to as "happiness" and was frequently linked to the quality of relationships within the school. It was thought that the nature of student-teacher interaction was such that satisfied, competent, professional teachers would generate happy students. A reduction in a student's happiness at school quickly energized a parent to intervene at the school. Parents frequently mentioned the approachability of the teacher to both the student and the parent as an important facet of student satisfaction. The assessing and reporting procedures used by schools were of concern to parents and though 40.7% of parents thought schools were extremely effective in reporting to parents, only 19.7% were of the same opinion about the processes used by schools to monitor student attainment and their ability to give feedback to the students. Approximately one-third of parents interviewed had negative comments to make about the reporting processes used by schools, and some queried the time and effort teachers put into the process. Parents consistently expressed a desire for accurate, specific information about student progress. Opinions were evenly divided about the relative value of written reports, interviews or a combination of both.

Within the factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff*, parents saw the professional development and ongoing learning of teachers as essential for school effectiveness and a core component of school culture . They were concerned about the lack of opportunities for promotion of teachers and thought that it was necessary for principals to utilize teacher expertise outside of the classroom. Nearly all parents were supportive of the efforts made by teachers and were glowing in their praise of teachers who were seen to be very committed. The positive effect these teachers had upon their children was readily acknowledged by parents. If staff were seen to be non-committed it was thought to reflect poorly on the principal. The work habits of the principal were seen to be a powerful model for all staff.

Parent comments about the factor *Facilities and Financial Management* were linked to the processes used to determine the school budget, the lack of appropriate financial support from the government which restricted availability of support staff and teacher development time, and the nature of the internal and external environment of the school. Parents frequently mentioned that the appearance of the school was linked to the climate of the school. A sense of order, pride in children's work indicated by its colorful display, and the manner in which one was greeted at the front office were thought by some parents as indicators of the climate of a school.

Parents saw *Goal Emphasis* to be a key function of the principal's responsibility. Given this, parents still wished to participate in the formation of a school's goals. If the principal was articulate and frequently expressed views about the purpose of the school, then a team consensus of the central purpose or vision for the school could be generated. Parents thought that they were active team members along with the staff and students and should actively participate in the pursuit of school goals.

Parents interviewed were definite in their opinion that the effectiveness of the principal was highly positively correlated with the global effectiveness of a school. However, the relationship generated by the questionnaire responses does not appear as strong as the verbal opinions. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables and calculated from questionnaire responses was .507. The principal was the definite hub of the school, and in the opinion of parents a good school invariably had a good principal. It was through the participation of a skilled principal in the multiple activities of the school that effectiveness improved. Parents indicated that effective principals encouraged staff to be involved, to grow both personally and professionally, and gave feedback to teachers about their performance in the classroom. These activities of the principal enhanced job satisfaction for staff, and because of the nature of the teacher-student interactions increased student satisfaction with school.

CHAPTER 6

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

This chapter deals first with the effectiveness responses of principals on the important school effectiveness factors. Discussion then centers on the principals' thoughts about who should judge the effectiveness of an individual school. Regression analysis is used on the questionnaire responses to identify the factors principals are most likely to use when judging the overall effectiveness of a principal or school. Finally, the relationship between global principal effectiveness and global school effectiveness is explored.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information relating to the following research questions posed for this study:

Question 7.	How do principals rate the effectiveness of schools on important criteria of effectiveness?
Question 8.	What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of principals' global ratings of principal effectiveness?
Question 9.	What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of principals' global ratings of school effectiveness?
Question 10.	What is the relationship between principals' global ratings of principal effectiveness and principals' global ratings of school effectiveness?

The presentation in this chapters is similar to that of the previous chapter. Both quantitative and qualitative data are presented in order to provide a more complete description of numerical findings to which are added the responses gleaned from the interview data and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire data. This is necessary to reveal the difference of opinion which exists among principals. All the quotations contained within this chapter are the recorded words of the 13 principals interviewed from August 12 to September 23, 1988.

Principal Perceptions of School and Principal Effectiveness on Seven School Effectiveness Factors

When answering the questionnaire, principals were asked to indicate the importance of each item for school effectiveness and to indicate the actual effectiveness of the principal or school on that item. Response categories were not effective (1), slightly effective, moderately effective, highly effective, and extremely effective (5).

The quantitative data from the principals' questionnaires were analyzed in two ways. Frequency responses and mean scores for the importance of each item rated by the respondents were calculated. These were displayed in Table 4.1 and ranked according to the mean value of responses, highest first. Secondly, as indicated in Chapter 4, the items with a mean value greater than or equal to 3.5 and appearing in both principals' and parents' rankings were extracted. A factor analysis of the resulting 40 most important items was undertaken and results were reported in Table 4.4. A seven-factor solution for items important to school effectiveness was chosen and the results were reported in Chapter 4.

The effectiveness mean score and standard deviation for each of the seven factors for school effectiveness were calculated and are reported in Table 6.1. These are used because in the discussion there is a focus on the seven factors revealed by the factor analysis as being associated with school effectiveness.

The percentage frequencies of principals' responses to the effectiveness of principals and schools on each of the 40 items used in the factor analysis are reported in Table 6.2. For the interest of readers, the response frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations for all items in the questionnaire are given in Table D.3 and reported in Appendix D. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for all seven factors are given in Table D.4 and reported in Appendix D. All the factors were strongly positively correlated with values ranging from .219 to .742, and all are significant beyond the .05 level. The principals' responses in isolation therefore support the validity of the original factor analysis used to ascertain the factors associated with school effectiveness.

Table 6.1

Principals' Effectiveness Ratings on the School Effectiveness Factors
(n = 84)

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
Facilities and Financial Management	3.90	0.71
Student Centeredness	3.88	0.57
Principal as Nexus	3.80	0.53
Academic Program Focus	3.70	0.66
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	3.69	0.60
Goal Emphasis	3.67	0.61
Parental Support	3.63	0.65

Principal as Nexus

Table 6.1 shows that the mean for this factor is 3.80. This factor had the third highest mean score of the seven factors. Within the factor the individual item means range from 4.11 for item 67(a)--two-way channels of communication with all staff--to 3.37 for item 71--improving the work of staff members. Principals had the highest level of agreement on item 78--recognizing the uniqueness of each community--with a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.65. Recognition of the unique nature of the school community was linked with parental support and will be discussed within that factor. The three items on communication (67 (a) (b) (c)), which had high mean effectiveness scores from the questionnaire data also emerged as a critical component of this factor, *Principal as Nexus*, during interviews with principals.

The communication ability of the principal was seen by principals as crucial for building a team, generating togetherness, and for creating a common purpose as the focus

Table 6.2

Principal Ratings of the Effectiveness of Schools on Important Effectiveness Items
(n = 84)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness(%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 1: Principal as Nexus								
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	0.0	2.4	10.8	60.2	26.5	4.11	0.68
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	1.2	3.6	14.3	51.2	29.8	4.05	0.84
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	0.0	1.2	25.3	49.4	24.1	3.96	0.74
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	0.0	3.6	24.1	47.0	25.3	3.94	0.80
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	0.0	2.4	20.5	59.0	18.1	3.93	0.70
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	0.0	0.0	24.7	58.0	17.3	3.93	0.65
75	Maintaining an open school climate	0.0	2.5	23.5	60.5	13.6	3.85	0.67
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	0.0	2.4	30.1	19.4	18.1	3.83	0.75
65	Principal keeping up to date with new teaching methods	1.2	0.0	28.9	57.8	12.0	3.80	0.69
62	Principal acting as a role model	0.0	4.8	34.9	45.8	14.5	3.70	0.78
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	0.0	6.0	36.9	41.7	15.5	3.67	0.81
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	0.0	6.2	37.0	43.2	13.6	3.64	0.80
70	Providing feedback to staff members	1.2	4.8	42.9	40.5	10.7	3.55	0.80
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	0.0	8.5	36.6	46.3	8.5	3.55	0.77
71	Improving the work of staff members	1.2	6.0	53.0	33.7	6.0	3.37	0.74
Factor 2: Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff								
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	0.0	3.6	26.2	45.2	25.0	3.92	0.81
23	High staff morale	0.0	4.8	26.2	52.4	16.7	3.81	0.77
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	0.0	8.3	33.3	35.7	22.6	3.73	0.91
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	1.2	11.9	28.6	36.9	21.4	3.66	0.99
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	0.0	3.6	37.3	49.4	9.6	3.65	0.71
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	0.0	6.0	36.9	46.4	10.7	3.62	0.76
27	Staff keeping up to date with new teaching methods	0.0	7.1	38.1	40.5	14.3	3.62	0.82
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	0.0	8.3	39.3	36.9	15.5	3.60	0.85
28	Teachers willing to consider change	0.0	7.1	38.1	44.0	10.7	3.58	0.78

continued

Table 6.2 (continued)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 3: Student Centeredness								
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	0.0	2.4	14.3	58.3	25.0	4.06	0.70
16	High student morale	0.0	1.2	20.5	51.8	26.5	4.04	0.72
22	A student behavior management program	0.0	2.4	29.8	44.0	23.8	3.89	0.79
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	2.4	3.6	28.6	38.1	27.4	3.85	0.95
21	High student satisfaction with the school	0.0	2.4	31.0	54.8	11.9	3.76	0.69
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	1.2	2.4	32.5	50.6	13.3	3.72	0.77
Factor 4: Facilities and Financial Management								
42	School budget developed with all staff & parents	1.2	6.0	7.1	52.4	33.3	4.11	0.87
45	Well-maintained school grounds and facilities	1.2	4.8	22.6	46.4	25.0	3.89	0.88
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	0.0	10.7	26.2	46.4	16.7	3.69	0.88
Factor 5: Goal Emphasis								
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	0.0	1.2	28.6	51.2	19.0	3.88	0.72
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	0.0	4.8	51.8	36.1	7.2	3.46	0.70
Factor 6: Parental Support								
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	0.0	2.4	31.0	50.0	16.7	3.81	0.74
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	1.2	6.0	50.0	32.1	10.7	3.45	0.81
Factor 7: Academic Program Focus								
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	0.0	3.6	31.3	36.1	28.9	3.90	0.86
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program	0.0	6.1	41.5	34.1	18.3	3.65	0.85
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	0.0	7.1	40.5	41.7	10.7	3.56	0.78

of that togetherness. One principal said one essential requirement for an effective school is very close communication with the staff. Included in this is talking socially with them in the staff room at morning tea, even spending some time talking with them as

> you are moving around the classrooms, watching them. That's how you get the gut feeling that things may not be quite right. I find that the teachers always want to talk to you. Some will come in early to talk to you in the mornings.

Communication was seen as a central requisite skill to the building of a team. Principals thought that team work underpinned the establishment of quality education for the students. For a quality team to develop, it was essential that people have positive feelings towards other team members. In the words of one principal,

> the quality of education depends on the feelings that people have towards each other--whether they are prepared to listen to others, or to be part of the team effort. I think that whatever a principal does, one of the real factors is their ability to do the required team building.

Sound interpersonal skills were required if the principal was to do this. This was indicated by the principal who said, "There is a strong need for the principal to be a people person able to build relationships. If he can't, then the whole purpose of the place won't become central to its operation." One principal with wide experience in many schools indicated that the management style of principals has had to change over the years to accommodate this approach. "More and more these days the emphasis is on people relating, people being able to work through problems. The days of the principal who could control with circulars and whatever has not gone, but one can't rely on that approach any more." The importance of the ability to successfully communicate with a wide range of people was linked by principals to the creation of an appropriate school climate.

Communication patterns between the various constituents within education was seen frequently as an indicator of the climate within the organization. The development of an appropriate school climate required good communication channels, but a principal indicated that

> climate encompasses a lot of things. It has heaps to do with relationships and it is relationships between senior staff and staff, between staff and staff, between staff and

> students, between staff and parents, between students and students and also between students and their parents. It has something to do with liking each other, liking each other as persons.

All principals thought the nature of school climate was linked with school effectiveness. They were unanimous in their desire to have an open, warm, supportive, caring school climate. One principal, who iterated the thoughts of many, said:

> A school should be friendly and a place where kids are valued and respected. It shouldn't be a place where there is an aloof staff. It should be a place where parents feel free to wander in and out. It should be a place where people know what they are on about and where they are going. There is a definite purpose. It should be reasonably attractive and look as though people care about the place.

This sentiment was repeated by the principal who said that schools should have

> a climate that is warm, caring--where teachers and students feel secure, where the people are supportive of each other, where the designated leaders in the school show an interest in the staff and are aware of what they are doing. A place where there is an organized structure so all people understand how things happen. A place where the relationships are warm, caring. People are clear and know what the expectations are in terms of curriculum and organization. Communication is good and there is a sense of purpose within the school and each knows their part for achieving that purpose.

Both principals pointed to an added factor that must be a component of the school climate: a sense of purpose. Purpose, frequently stated as "vision", was the focus for team building. The achievement of the central purpose of the school required the cooperation and energy from all people within the school. We will return to this point. Another frequently-mentioned aspect of climate was the safety and security of children. "The safety of the children is important, children not feeling that they are going to be hit or bashed up, or tormented and teased." Principals were also concerned about the security of staff. They also wanted staff to like their place of work and to be comfortable. Staff mental health was a component of climate and mentioned by the principal who said:

> Psychologically staff should always feel safe and comfortable; and therefore as a manager you must make them feel safe and comfortable. This is an important aspect of school climate. Climate includes things like an attractive staff room, knowing how they will get time off, all that sort of stuff. However, staff must earn professional freedom.

Principals acknowledged that a happy, secure, focussed staff had a positive effect on the children. The nature of the relationship between teacher and students was such that the mood and general demeanor of each affected the other. This also applied to the nature of the relationship between the school and the community. Principals thought that a good relationship between the community and the school increased the productivity of the people within the school and boosted the morale of the staff.

Conflict between community expectations of a school and a school's actual performance affects climate. In many cases, people's feelings about the school are partially formed by how they are treated when they approach the school about some matter or by what they observe when they are at the school. According to one principal, a school should have

> a climate that reflects the community's views about what an effective school should do. I believe that it is very important that when people come into the school that they see order, pride in the surroundings, that the children are safe and happy, that they feel good about the way in which they are greeted, that their concerns are dealt with in a friendly manner so that they don't feel like intruders, but rather a special visitor. The place gives an impression of what we are on about. It indicates that kids have pride in the school, their teacher, and classrooms. That the work of the students is valued and displayed appropriately. That people interact in a friendly, courteous, respectful way to each other. However, to say that this is a great school climate, it must be more than just a friendly place. Output is important.

The happiness of all people within the school was considered important, but this has to be tied to productivity. Several principals mentioned that productivity was the key to an appropriate climate. It was seen to be a more effective way of generating a positive climate than merely attending to the needs of everybody, ensuring happiness, and hoping that productivity would then occur. One principal said, "When teachers are proud of the product that is leaving the school, then they will be a lot happier and be able to celebrate the achievements. This is better than the other way of possibly trying to get a happy staff and then looking for productivity." Purposeful productivity was linked with a continual awareness of where the school was heading. A principal indicated this when saying:

> A school climate revolves around people. It is a good climate when people want to come, enjoy whatever they are doing, and when they are doing more than the basic requirements. It comes from a basic sense of purpose. It depends upon some basic elements--that is plotting where we are now, where we would like to go, where are the gaps, and what would we like to do about it? But at the same time ensuring that the gaps are not pulling one away from the real mission.

Communication, climate, sense of purpose, and productivity are intertwined. They are complementary and essential to the achievement of effectiveness within a school. The mission, goals, or central purpose of the school are the stars to assist in charting the course of action. On the way to achieving these goals, it is necessary for the principal to be a role model. Role modelling helps set expectations for people within the school. Modelling--though powerful--was not considered sufficient to assist staff achieve the goals. All principals saw the importance of giving meaningful feedback about performance and helping them plan for professional growth.

The common vision was the yardstick against which personal performance needed to be measured. In the words of one principal, "There should be some sense of a common plan. Everybody should be able to articulate that plan. People should be open to discussion and criticism of their ideas, prepared to debate them. From debate, the common plan emerges." One principal indicated that for some reflective learners, the sense of common purpose was enough to focus personal growth:

> In a situation where the school has clear, set goals, all persons know what they are aiming for: they know how they are going to do it, they have a belief in what they are doing and why they are doing it, they challenge why they are doing it. As a result of that, people are happier with their work even though some of them may be going through some sort of change processes in terms of challenging their own practice; they are still happy as a result of the process and their part they are playing.

For others who were non-reflective learners, principals saw that they needed to be the instructional leaders continually focussing on the children within the school. One principal stated,

> I would rather call it educational leadership--the responsibility for a focus on kids and learning, talking about it all of the time, modelling it for the staff. It is the focus of the principal's job. I wouldn't see value in the position if I was just the administrator.

Many principals indicated that the administration and organization of the school are activities that are necessary to support the essential work of the teachers in the classrooms. However, many principals saw that the demands of "administrivia" could easily usurp a major time component of a principal's working day. It was possible to leave the school at the end of a busy day feeling satisfied with one's efforts without realizing they had not been focussed on goal attainment. Effective administration was necessary, but it was thought that it could easily become a goal unto itself. Many principals saw that a focus on administration was like a glacial crevasse, easy to fall into but difficult to extract oneself from.

To be actively and effectively involved with a focus on teachers and their work required an understanding of successful classroom practice. Many principals commented upon the necessity of the principal being the instructional leader. As one indicated,

> The principal should be the instructional leader. I don't believe that a principal who does not know how to teach can actually supervise teachers who are teaching. You must know; you must have an understanding. To have that, I believe you must be able to do it and do it well. Principals must have the knowledge of the teaching/learning connection. They have got to know about interpersonal communication, discipline, all of those areas. They must be able to practice it as well. It is one thing to know it, but another to practice it.

Nonetheless many principals, while acknowledging the necessity for competence as classroom practitioners, thought that it was not possible to retain status as the best teacher within a school. Excellent classroom practice required continual contact with a group of children on an ongoing basis and an intimate knowledge of all aspects of a changing curriculum. Many principals saw it was possible to utilize teacher expertise to assist other teachers and so compensate for their own lack of continuous classroom practice. They thought that a primary target of their role must be instructional leadership focussing on the learning of the adults within the school, modelling with teachers the processes they expected between teacher and child. One principal indicated this when saying,

> an instructional leader, to me means the person who is responsible for the teaching and the learning of the adults in the place, who models the way it should be in the classroom for the kids. Some can talk about this, but their actions indicate that administrivia is more important.

Central to this focus on the adults was the emphasis on assisting teachers to improve their skills. Some saw that instructional leadership required the principal to be "more of a facilitator/motivator for other people to develop. Teachers can then go to others who have the skills or engage in PD aspects as a cooperative group to develop and refine their skills." Irrespective of their viewpoint about the focus for instructional leadership, principals saw that they had absolute responsibility for the supervision of staff. One principal said,

> I don't think that a principal can escape that responsibility. A principal has to be out there in the classrooms to hear, identify the needs and ensure the development of a program that caters for the needs of the students. Unless you are there, it is difficult to address the problems and issues.

Another principal reinforced this opinion when saying that staff supervision was

> absolutely essential. It is probably in the top three to five things for the principal to do. The principal supervises according to the things that the teachers and school says it is going to do to achieve the school goals. I think that it is essential.

The same principal saw supervision as an essential part of the staff development process. This principal linked the vision of how the school could be, or the goals of the school, with the supervisionary processes. The vision of the school should drive all of the actions within the school. To achieve it, principals

> need to be able to lead, manage, and develop a staff development program. I mean all sorts of people, not just teachers. Principals need to have the ability to help teachers understand the vision that they want the school to go towards. Not only do they need the vision in their own heads, but they have to be able to explain it to every one else and get support for it and then use the skills that they have to harness the energy of the supporters (i.e., management skills, staff development skills, and all of that sort of stuff).

The central vision was seen as the yardstick against which teacher performance was measured. The goals were reinforced by the principal's high expectations of all personnel within the school and were the basis on which feedback was given to staff.

Many principals were of the opinion that supervision was a way of tacitly valuing the work of teachers. One principal said that supervision is

> important in terms of teacher morale. It indicates to teachers that their activities are important enough for you to give feedback, comment on, and give help with. It is also part of my continuing professional development. I keep up-to-date with the classroom practices for the changing curriculum. It is also important for the students that you are frequently in the classroom. . . . It allows you to see the little extras that teachers do and be able to praise them. You can write them in your diary and ensure follow up. Praise needs to be planned, not in an artificial way but such that it does occur.

With a consistent presence within the classroom, the principal had heightened awareness of the activities of the students and the teachers. On-the-spot praise or feedback soon after an event was observed allowed the reinforcement of appropriate behaviors and deeds, so facilitating the principal's high expectations of staff and students. Some principals commented that it was easy to become too busy to take the time necessary for giving appropriate praise. A negative custodial focus could then easily creep into comments made to both students and teachers.

As well as valuing the work of teachers principals saw a supervision program as an essential component of ensuring that agreed policy was transferred into action within the classroom. Supervision was important to one principal

> from a couple of points of view. It is all very well to have a policy written down on paper, and for the teachers to think you "beaut," I agree with all of that, but then not necessarily put it into practice. A constant supervision program enables a principal to ensure that it does occur. It assists with the translation of theory into practice.

Hence, supervision was seen by principals to be linked with translation of theory to practice, a way of supporting teachers and valuing their activities, a means of the principal keeping in touch with changing methodology, a conduit for modelling expectations for staff and students and a time to give praise for efforts and achievements, as well as a process for assessing strengths and weaknesses of teachers and so assisting them in planning for their professional growth. One principal indicated that supervision was the basis of a staff development program and said,

> I think the other thing that you need to determine is where the strengths and weaknesses of your people are. You recognize the strengths to be able to utilize them within the school, and you also need to know the weaknesses to do something about building them up. With the right atmosphere, people will acknowledge their own deficiencies and work with you to improve them. That comes back to the professional development program, and it is critical for the principals to be involved. From the supervision point of view you determine where people should be going--but you can only do that in discussion with them.

This principal as most others, saw that atmosphere or climate was critical to addressing weaknesses. It was part of the development of trust. People will disclose if there is trust and support for further action. Most principals thought that high trust levels take quite a period of time to develop with staff, but these trust levels are easy to destroy if the actions of the principal are not congruent with verbal articulations.

Summary

Within the factor *Principal as Nexus* there are three clusters of activities: communication, establishment of the vision or goals, and interaction of the principal with the broader school community. Effective communication is basic to success in the latter two. Each of these is a key component of the culture of an individual school. Principals saw communication as a major issue to be addressed for school effectiveness, and their level of interpersonal skills were critical for effectiveness. Communication was vital for the development of team work, for sharing a vision, and for getting others to work towards that vision.

Good communication was necessary before one could focus on the learning of the adults. This learning could assist with the development of goal clarity but it was also important for the principal to model consistent expectations for the staff. As a part of principals valuing learning for adults, they must demonstrate their own learning and growth. To further assist with the development of staff, it was necessary for principals to supervise staff activities. Supervision was an essential component of the effective principal's role. Principals indicated a supervision program has two major purposes. It not only identified strengths and weaknesses in the performance of staff but also aided with the translation of policy into practice. Ensuring that policy was put into practice reaffirmed the importance being placed on the achievement of the goals of the school.

Supervision was also linked to the climate that was generated within the school. It was seen that an appropriate school climate was one in which adults and students felt safe and supported. An open climate with high levels of trust facilitated people disclosing weaknesses and being prepared to work to eliminate those weaknesses. With an appropriate level of trust, people will risk and experiment and hence grow. The processes of supervision being used must be in congruence with a stated focus on the learning of the adults as well as the children within the school. With the appropriate climate there was a warm, caring atmosphere and a sense of order and pride in the work being done. However, the climate was inexorably linked with output. The work being done should reflect the purpose of the school and help to generate personal satisfaction for the participants.

Good communication skills are also necessary for the principal to interact with a variety of people external to the immediate school. These range from Education Department personnel, community leaders, to members of other government departments. In all of these interactions, principals are by their actions passing on messages to these people about the purpose of their schools. They are models from which judgements are made.

Principals indicated that they thought their actions were critical to the success of the school. They perceived that they are the nexus through which actions promoting effectiveness must sweep. One principal, summarizing the opinions of many, said:

> Principals can not escape their responsibility for what happens within the school. The principal is the pivotal person and on the back of the skills and abilities of the principal rides the credibility of the school. If a principal can share the vision and get the teachers and other staff to partake of that vision, plan cooperatively to move towards it using the strengths of staff but at the same time working on the weaknesses, then great things are possible. It is not easy and requires many skills.

Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff

The mean score for this factor was 3.69 (on a five-point scale) with a standard deviation of 0.60. The mean value was the fifth highest. The mean scores of the principal responses for individual items ranged from 3.92 for item 30--teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities--to 3.58 for item 28--teachers willing to consider change. The responses were such that at least 52% of the principals rated staff performance for each item within the factor as highly effective or extremely effective.

Principals saw the necessity of teachers being willing to change, to work on their own professional development, and to work as a group for the improvement of the school as essential for school effectiveness. The principal was responsible for engendering this approach. In the words of one principal, improvement and change in staff are more

> an issue of management of the staff curriculum. You are the coach of the team, not the bloody best runner in the team. You need to know how to run, but you might have done your best running five or ten years ago. Now you are good at helping other people run really well, both by talking to them about their teaching and also by providing them with the things that they need for their professional development, resources, non-contact time, and so on.

As well as assisting teachers in focussing on their strengths and weaknesses and then having each staff member with a personal program capitalizing on personal strengths and working on weaknesses, there must be a willingness on the part of staff members to work as a team on strengths and weaknesses. Principals thought the total school must harness energy to achieve goals; hence crucial to developing school effectiveness was the ability to get teachers to acknowledge the necessity of thinking about activities beyond the scope of their individual classrooms. In the words of one principal, a big hindrance to total school development

> is people's unwillingness to look further than their own class or their own situation, an unwillingness to work as a member of a team towards school goals, whether it be development of curriculum or the development of an action plan for the next term. It is the abdication of the individual person's responsibility as a group member for the needs of the total group.

The non-acknowledgement of the needs of the total school was a reflection of the non-internalization of these goals, focus or central mission of the school. Principals needed to attend to this, and one indicated:

> I have tried to set up groups to reflect on the school, where it is going and what its mission is with the ongoing decline we are experiencing. Having done that, I have been encouraging people to loosen up on the control of their own little areas. I think that the nice, friendly approach has probably gone as far as it can. Probably the next step is to develop a much stronger system of teacher/principal interaction about their duties and activities where I meet with them regularly and really question and challenge.

The principal was responsible for the challenge of staff, but it required the prior building of positive relationships with every staff member. The aspect of relationship-building received consideration under the previous factor, *Principal as Nexus*.

Principals saw that if teachers were deeply involved in their personal professional development, as well as working with the other staff members towards common, agreed upon goals, then job satisfaction would be high. Job satisfaction was linked with morale, but one principal stated that "if people like and feel basically proud of their principal, then school morale will be high." That person thought that the principal determined the morale of the school. However, most linked morale to happiness and productivity, and this was frequently commented on when talking about the ideal climate within a school.

Teacher commitment to the school and the job were seen to be important. Principals were appreciative of the efforts made by committed staff and received positive feedback from parents about committed teachers. One principal indicated that

> where people have a low commitment, they also have a low understanding of what the job of teaching entails. So it really is a matter of doing something for that teacher; raise the level of understanding of what the job is all about initially, and during the process of doing that raise the level of commitment.

Concomitant with commitment was giving praise for effort. Praise enhanced the self-concept of the staff members and increased their satisfaction with their role. One principal commenting on the necessity for giving praise, said, "You must give kudos for what is good. If people are doing something, let's recognize it and let's publicize it too. Make a bit of a fuss about it." As part of garnering commitment, principals thought that staff needed to be involved in the decision-making processes within the school. One principal said "I think you have got to establish the relationships and then empower teachers so they are directing the activities, but you retain a certain balance." Teachers' sense of control over their own destiny was seen as an important aspect of their commitment and job satisfaction.

Satisfaction was also linked with teacher involvement in activities outside of the classroom. It was part of "the shared decision-making and the shared responsibility. I think that in this day and age where promotion is extremely limited that we must allow staff to get a lot more satisfaction out of what they do rather than just teach in the classrooms."

This principal thought that when a teacher "has developed to a certain stage, you then give them a little more professional freedom. You do that by giving them greater responsibility, allowing them to take responsibility for a greater part of the decision-making mechanisms within the school." This principal mentioned that he/she allowed teachers to take responsibility for submissions to district office about additional staffing, increased resource allocation, and management of components of the school development plan. However, another principal indicated that the involvement of staff in activities within the school but peripheral to their actual classroom role could cause problems.

> My problem comes because I have got six or seven really competent teachers on the staff. How do you keep that involvement level up? I think that it can cause frustration for the principal and deputy. You tend to lose control of what is going on around you.

Several principals saw this tension between a desire for increased involvement by staff in aspects of the school's management outside of their classroom responsibilities and a principal's personal responsibility for the activities within the school. Prior to increasing staff involvement, "you knew exactly where things were going and every thing that was happening. As you gradually let go of these and hand them over to people who enjoy doing it, you start to lose a bit of that total control." Wider involvement by teachers was linked to their satisfaction, which was often expressed as "happiness." However, when wider involvement is the norm, it appears that only very secure, competent principals do not face the dilemma of control versus increased involvement.

There was general agreement by principals that the happiness of teachers was an important aspect for engendering enthusiasm for the job. With happy staff and good relationships it was possible to utilize the team to develop the total school. One principal thought that to do this you needed "a principal who is an educational leader who uses a collaborative approach, one who shares and allows teachers to participate, who has an understanding of human relationships and knows the teachers. Therefore I maintain that the principal is the linchpin." All principals saw their role as crucial to all aspects of staff performance within this factor, *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff*.

Summary

Principals thought it was necessary for all staff to have a primary focus on and concern for the attainment of the children within their classes. However, if this was done to the exclusion of concern for the activities in the wider school, then it would detract from the achievements of the school. A group concern for the development and attainment of a school vision was necessary. Vision is central to culture and a team focus could release the enormous potential of the group and "great things were possible."

Evaluation of performance with feedback to individual staff members enhanced staff professional growth. A spin-off from the supervision program was increased job satisfaction for staff. Nevertheless, some principals saw that to enhance job satisfaction it was necessary to utilize the skills of teachers in matters external to their classroom activities. This could produce a tension for the principal: the benefits gained for the teacher by using the teacher against a principal's desire for personal control. Principals were unanimous that their activities as the nexus within the school were essential to the overall effectiveness of all facets within the factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff.*

Student Centeredness

The mean score for this factor was 3.88, and it was the second-highest factor mean. Individual items within the factor had mean scores which ranged from 4.06 for item 19--student progress and attainment is reported to parents--to a low of 3.72 for item 18--monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students. Principals responded such that 73.3% of them thought that their schools were highly effective to extremely effective in reporting student progress and attainment to parents. Notwithstanding this, 36.1% of them thought that the monitoring of student progress with feedback to the students was only moderately effective or lower.

The issue of reporting and assessing student work was an area of considerable concern for principals, and one that many of them were grappling with. One said,

> I don't know that we have really cracked that yet. I think that you need a variety of strategies and it must be something that goes right across the school. . . . I think that students need feedback to tell them how they are going rather than a report card that says how they went. You need to be giving feedback about the now and how to improve. I would look to some type of system that had more emphasis on assessment of how to improve to get where you wish to go.

One principal thought that as part of an emphasis on the "now," principals needed to give praise in the classroom and follow up to the work being done, saying things like, "It is good here but how can you improve it here? What else can occur?" This meant that the feedback was being used as part of the teaching process. Ideally, parents should be involved in the ongoing dialogue about a child's work. Principals saw the whole process of giving appropriate feedback ongoing and required a lot of interaction, time, and skill from the teachers. One principal, when referring to the assessment of student work and the reporting of it to parents, said, "I think that it is something that we do very poorly and should do better. I really feel that in relation to the child's own level we have abdicated our responsibility to give some indication of where that level fits in the overall picture." This was a concern expressed by many principals: giving information to both the child and the parents about the child's performance in relation to the norm for that age group.

There was disquiet amongst principals who felt that the current methods of assessment being used did not match the curriculum content and more particularly did not match the approach used in the teaching of that content. Most principals agreed with the principal who said that the assessment process should be

> one which is clearly related to what is being taught within the school, so there is congruence between what you are trying to say about outcomes and the processes you are using to test or evaluate those outcomes. . . . It also needs to be information that is easily digestible by both parents and kids.

This worry about the degree of congruence between the teaching methods and the assessment processes could be the reason principals rated their school performance lower on giving appropriate feedback to students than the actual process of reporting to parents. Principals recognized that assessment "has to be continuous: the kids have to be involved in it, the teachers as well. It must focus on the work that the child is doing."

The principals' other concern was the children's understanding of the assessment process. As one principal indicated, in a good assessment procedure

> the children understand how it works. So that it isn't a mysterious process. The children understand how it works and they know what they have to do in order to be successful. . . . It is clear to the kids, the parents and it reinforces and is in line with the goals of the school.

Clarity of expectation for the children was seen as important, but the process of reporting the same information to the parents was seen as difficult. A mixture of written reports and parent/teacher interviews were favoured, but ongoing continuous contact between the teacher and parent was seen by the majority of principals as the most desirable but non-achievable feature of the communication process. Where parents were involved in bringing their children to school and collecting them after school, potential existed for regular dialogue. Parents tend to do this more with younger children. One Junior Primary principal indicated that the school had therefore structured the day so that

> we have all of our teachers stay in the classroom for the last half hour of the day and parents are welcome to come in and join in with what is going on. . . . We also have a deliberate policy where the teachers go out and hover amongst the parents and talk to them, say "hello," and that sort of thing. In that way I think that we have a fairly open relationship and parents are able to find out how their kids are going. I think it is important for parents to know how their children are progressing; it's also important for the kids, obviously.

Student satisfaction and morale were frequently mentioned as "happiness." It was seen as a way to judge a school. When visiting another school, one principal stated that:

> I look to see happy kids, happy to be there and to be part of the place, wanting to learn and be actively involved in what they are doing. Not to be frightened to question, experiment, and get in there and give it a go and know that their ideas will be valued; that they can have some input into what is going on. So the best indicator of the school is the kids' attitudes and how they are working in classrooms.

As mentioned in the previous two factors and reinforced here, the relationships between all of the people within the school were seen to be critical to the working atmosphere within it. One principal thought that judgements about a school's effectiveness could be made very quickly

> when you walk into the school. If you have a happy working atmosphere, kids are productive. They are learning. If there are no discipline problems in the sense that

> you don't see teachers spending all of their time in shouting at kids, ordering them around but notice the discipline is coming from the kids themselves. Where everybody is open and generally happy, where kids are learning, and where classrooms are exciting places to be.

In nearly all cases, principals linked happiness with output. One without the other was seen to be counterproductive to the attainment of school effectiveness. Many principals were concerned about the happiness of students and frequently monitored it. Much of the monitoring was thought by many principals to be a subconscious process but something they were very aware of.

Many cited examples of how a change was instantly noticeable. The mood of the student population can change on windy days, on days which have thunderstorms, or on sunny days after a period of bad weather. The weather is but one aspect of the environment that affects the mood of children. Some principals saw this as another aspect of supervising the school. One principal declared:

> I like to get out in the yard in the morning and talk to the kids. . . . It is a useful way of supervising the school--just checking toilets for graffiti and rubbish in the yard, what sort of mood the kids are in. All of that is part of supervising. The school groundsman and the cleaner are very wise about what is going on in the school, and I always spend some time talking with them.

One principal indicated that the involvement of the children in decision-making was critical to student satisfaction and a vital part of the overall school climate. This principal thought that "every child should have some input into how that classroom is managed. Children should have some input into how the whole school is ordered, at least in terms of school rules. Control over your own lot is the most important thing to me." This was thought to be an extension to students of the same rights principals gave to staff. Involvement in decision-making that affected school life and conditions, whether by students or staff members, was seen as necessary. It was another example of the necessity of principals having congruence between their articulation and practice. Principals saw this as tacit acknowledgement of the changed emphasis on student rights and privileges and this will be discussed further under strategies for the improvement of the effectiveness of schools.

Summary

Principals were unanimous in acknowledging the need for a variety of strategies for assessing and reporting the progress of students to both the students and their parents. They indicated that they preferred a mixture of interviews with written reports, but in the ideal world they would like a process of continuous contact among teacher, child, and parents.

Principals were emphatic that assessment and reporting methods used should be part of the immediate teaching learning interaction processes between teacher and child and that the processes used should be clearly understood by the child. Nevertheless, the processes must have the added capacity of being able to give parents meaningful feedback about the experiences and achievements of their children. Some principals were concerned that children and their parents did not receive adequate information about the child's performance in relation to the performance of other children of a similar age.

Staff satisfaction, morale, and happiness were seen to affect student satisfaction and morale. Once again principals commented upon the importance of the quality of the relationships within a school. Several principals thought that student participation in decision-making was linked to student morale. These principals thought that there should be more of a focus on student participation in decision-making within their classrooms.

Facilities and Financial Management

The mean score for this factor was 3.90, the highest mean of all of the factors. Within the individual items, item 42--school budget developed with staff and parents--had a mean of 4.11, and 85.7% of principals considered themselves highly effective or extremely effective at this. This item required principals to indicate whether the budget should be fixed with participation of teaching staff or staff and parents. An analysis of the choices made indicated that 73.9% of the principals chose the latter option while 26.1% of the principals thought that the budget should be fixed with the involvement of the teaching staff. Irrespective of the choice indicated, no discernible difference existed between the two groups in the level of effectiveness given to the process.

The care and attention given to the internal environment of schools was such that 36.9% of principals thought that their schools were moderately or slightly effective. External and internal environment were seen to be a reflection of the overall climate of the school. Principals thought that if staff and students took pride in student work, then the place would, in the words of one principal, "have things hanging around the rooms, corridors, students' work up and displayed." There was a generalized conception among principals about what a school should look like. Two principals indicated that the "place should look nice" or "it should be reasonably attractive and look as though people care about the place." The need for a sense of order and pride in the school was common among principals, and the following are indicative of what principals said: "I believe that it is very important that when people come into the school that they see order, pride in the surroundings," or "I am pleased with the place because the physical appearance is eye-catching and a sense of commitment, a sense of pride in the work being done is evident."

The development of a school budget was usually commented on when principals were talking about parent support and parental involvement. It was seen as an area where parents had some expertise and could readily be involved. Grounds development, facility maintenance, and financial management were frequently cited as areas for parental involvement. This will be discussed more fully in the *Parental Support* factor.

Goal Emphasis

The factor mean was 3.67, and it was the second-lowest mean of the seven factors. The processes of goal setting used by schools were such that 56.6% of the principals rated it as only moderately effective or worse, while only 7.2% of them thought thought the process extremely effective. Principals were of two minds about the involvement of parents in the determination of school goals, even though 91.4% of them thought parents should be involved. One principal who reflected the opinion of many others saw it as

> really important for the school program to reflect the goals and aspirations of the community, but I worry whether parents have the professional knowledge that is required by teachers about kids and learning, curriculum, etc. It is like me trying to fix my car. It was OK years ago, but they are now more complex and the little bit that I know about it isn't much good. I can easily make the efforts of the trained person much more difficult because of my meddling.

Principals recognized that "parents need a degree of real power in the decision-making processes" but perceived that parents lacked the professional knowledge required to make meaningful decisions in regard to curriculum content and curriculum priorities. It was thought by many principals and stated by one that

> for parents to participate they need information. They need to understand learning, the curriculum, and those sorts of things if they are going to participate in the decision-making about the curriculum. . . . However that is the understanding of the professionals and how do you sort out the dilemma? How do you sort out the role of the professional and the lay person's involvement and knowledge of what is happening to them and their kids?

One principal indicated that this dilemma had the potential of undermining and devaluing the teacher's professional expertise:

> I am concerned that the professional thing of teachers is not undermined to the extent that decisions that should be made with a fairly extensive knowledge of education get tossed out into the arena of school council too early or too easily. . . . However, there are probably many decisions that are still made by staff that need parental discussion.

Another principal indicated that within the school they were taking steps to provide the information base that parents required. The principal indicated that it was an educative process for the parents:

> We have now appointed a person who will be involved in setting up workshops in conjunction with a sub-committee of parents about the things that occur within the school. In that way parents will have better knowledge and can then participate meaningfully in the decision-making processes of the school.

The mere provision of knowledge was not seen to be sufficient by one principal because it was a more fundamental professional question. If parents are to "give specific input when a specific thing like a curriculum approach is under consideration . . .[then] there is almost a necessity to come to an agreement about learning theory if we are to progress. That takes such a long time even with a staff." Nonetheless, this concern about the level of involvement did not negate principals' perception of the necessity for having clearly articulated school goals that included, as one principal said, "school development plans, curriculum development plans, and who is going to do what and by when, because then there is a purpose and it is clearly visible and the people are working towards that common goal." Another principal felt it as essential that parents be involved in the decisions about school goals because of the political nature of the process. This person perceived that schools were becoming more insular and responsible for their own destinies. This principal indicated that,

> My view is obviously influenced by the politics of the day. And I think that these are the politics of the day. Schools in the next few years are in most things going to be more isolated from other schools and the system. . . . They will very much be a school unto themselves. They will be a small organization, like a ship by themselves at sea. One of the things that that ship has to do is steer its own course. It has a captain, the principal, it has the staff as a crew. The course it is going to chart, I think, has to be the course the community wants to chart: otherwise, it will arrive at a destination that the community doesn't want to be at. I think that would be dangerous both educationally and politically. So I think it is up to schools to help their communities make decisions about what they want the school to do. That means first giving the community information and then setting up structures to seriously involve the parents in making decisions about the school. . . . So in answer to your question, I think an effective school is one that has the parents personally involved in charting the course to be followed.

One principal, echoing the thoughts of other principals, indicated that the more the system changed, the more added activities and responsibilities were being left to principals. As a means of self-protection and accountability it was necessary for principals to involve parents in decision-making about school goals and the planning to achieve those goals.

Summary

Although 91.4% of principals thought that parents should be involved in the cooperative setting of school goals, they were divided as to the degree of meaning this input would have. There was concern expressed that parents do not have the professional knowledge required to make significant contributions. Surface level involvement could be a means of devaluing and undermining the professional knowledge of teachers. Strategies for giving parents the required information were available, but most of these strategies required an extensive time commitment from the parents. It was thought that the parents needed professional development programs. Agreement about a methodological approach to be followed by a school required the coalescing of opinion. This was time-consuming even with staff and possibly not achievable with parents. Notwithstanding, one principal was emphatic that irrespective of these difficulties it was essential for the parents to be part of the goal-setting process. Failing to encourage this was politically naive.

Parental Support

The mean for this factor was 3.63; principals therefore perceived that the level of school effectiveness was lower in this factor, *Parental Support*, than in the six other factors. In item 36--clarifying the educational program to the parents--57.2% of the principals rated performance at moderately effective or lower. Item 38--enlisting support of parent bodies--had 16.7% of principals rate their school's performance as extremely effective. During the interviews, parent support was seen as synonymous with parental participation and was the topic of considerable verbal input.

Principals were unanimous about the need for parental participation in the schools but differed on processes for the involvement, appropriate areas for involvement, degree of involvement, and the factors behind the Education Department policy initiatives in the area.

Participation of parents within the school was seen by all principals and expressed by one as "very important. I really believe in parent participation, have a genuine commitment to it. It is not something that is unwelcome to me at all. . . . I have never felt a siege mentality about parents." However the reasons behind the current Education Department's initiative for increased parental participation in the management of schools were questioned. One principal stated, "I have concerns about that. I believe that the Labor Party policy is to have parents take control of the system decision-making."

Given this scenario, there was frequent concern about the need to

> differentiate between participation and involvement. Parents are involved in the school just by the very fact that their children come here. I know of many areas where their involvement is of benefit to the school and the students. We have a lot of parent participation in the classroom and on school outdoor activities. We have active parent clubs and an energetic School Council that has a very good finance committee and an excellent grounds committee. Not so though with the curriculum subcommittee. It lacks real participation. I feel that there is knowledge and professional skills required to contribute in this area and it may be outside of the parents' experience.

This lack of knowledge could be why principals perceived that many parents did not wish to become involved in curriculum areas. Parents readily acknowledged their lack of expertise and hence many principals were of the opinion that

> there are many aspects of the school's operation that parents don't want to buy into. However, there are also many aspects that they do wish to and where their input is certainly valuable in itself. My experience shows that there is really only a minority of parents that want to be involved in much more than fund raising, grounds maintenance, and that sort of thing.

This perception of parents not wanting to be involved with curriculum management was reinforced by several principals. They indicated that parents "don't want to be involved in large explanations of what the curriculum is about." Principals were divided about the level of parental participation appropriate in curriculum management. Some thought that parents did not wish to participate, a larger percentage thought that they merely wished to give advice about broad curriculum directions, while a small number of principals thought that a minority of parents wanted the opportunity for detailed curriculum input and they wished to facilitate and encourage this. Nevertheless there was agreement by principals about the value of parents being involved in the schools irrespective of the level of involvement. As indicated by one principal, there are

> enormous spin-offs. It deformalizes the place, opens the lines of communication, and creates a damn sight more appreciation of teachers for what the problems of the parents and kids are; and the parents have a greater understanding of what the tasks of the teacher are and the problems that the teachers have.

The idea that parent participation and involvement led to improvement of educational opportunities for children was frequently expressed. "You can run without parents, but you are missing a 'heck' of a lot of opportunities to improve the education for the kids."

Another spin-off was the ability of the school to influence the wider community. One principal from a low socio-economic area indicated that

> in a community like the one we are in, the school can potentially provide parents with some pretty rewarding experiences. I see it as a way in which the school can have a positive effect on the whole community. It is a way of rippling out of the gates and into the community. . . . It means more work for parents, but it can do good for the image of the school.

Several principals acknowledged that parents participating within the school can have a negative effect. Their very participation can cause them to see deficiencies within the school. If parents are not totally aware of what the school is attempting to do, or if the interaction they view or take part in is outside of their experiences, then negative messages can be transmitted to the external environment. As one principal said, parental involvement "can also be negative, as when a kid last week told a parent to get [expletive deleted]. . . . When they are in here they see the dirty washing as well as the good stuff you like them to see. You can't fool people as easily when they are in the place." As a result of that episode, "a lot of judgements were made about the school. That person is quite influential and so those opinions went through a number of different avenues into the wider community." Another negative case cited by a principal occurred when students were packing up after a physical education lesson. The teacher had left the students and

> during the process of the kids putting the equipment away, two students decided that they would have a reasonable "fisticuff" bout. It resulted in one child having a cut lip. Apart from the fact of the injury to the child and the breach of duty of care by the teacher, there was also another concern. There were a lot of parents around that yard at that instance. It reflected in a very poor light as far as what we are trying to do in regards to discipline.

The school concerned had spent considerable time communicating its student behavior management program to the parents during the term; this one incident was later cited by a number of parents, not present at the time, to show that the new policy was not working.

Summary

Principals were unanimous about the value of parental involvement in school activities. However, there was concern expressed that the difference between involvement and participation and what was being discussed needed clarification when looking at this area. Some principals questioned the Education Department initiatives in the area and queried the motivation for the new policy. A smaller number of principals welcomed the moves to increase parental participation in school decision-making and were attempting to facilitate and encourage this development.

The level of involvement and the areas appropriate for participation were frequently mentioned. Many principals were of the opinion that, "There is really only a minority that want to be involved in much more than their fund raising, grounds maintenance, and that sort of thing." Irrespective of the level, principals saw participation as having positive effects on the school. Children benefited, communication between school and home improved, teachers and parents came to a greater understanding of the problems and issues confronting each other, the skill level of parents increased through their involvement, and the school influenced the wider community. The negative aspect of parents not understanding isolated incidents they observed and making judgements about the school from these situations were mentioned by several principals.

Academic Program Focus

Responses to the three items in this factor were such that is had a mean value of 3.70 (on a five-point scale) and a standard deviation of 0.66. This was the fourth-highest mean of the seven factors. The responses to the individual items indicated that the performance on item 10--the development of social skills is emphasized--with a mean of 3.90 was perceived to be more effective than for item 12--coordination of the continuity of the instructional program--with a mean of 3.65, and more effective than item 11--the development of student creativity. Item 11 had a mean score of 3.56. Principals scored the performance of their schools such that 28.9% rated them as extremely effective for emphasis in the development of social skills, while 47.6% of principals rated the performance of their schools for both items 11 and 12 as moderately effective or lower.

This aspect of school operation, *Academic Program Focus*, was not directly addressed in the interviews and so opinions applicable were made in passing when discussing other factors. Comments were made about curriculum content and staff expectations of students.

Two principals saw the need for the production of tighter guidelines on curriculum content. Greater conformity among schools in the curriculum being offered would be of advantage to highly mobile students. As one principal indicated,

> I see some benefit in a central authority saying "These are the areas we are looking at" but with local people being able to color those, even possibly put in additional ones without that basic core being touched. This would particularly help children who transfer from school to school.

One principal wanted the guidelines to distinguish areas where parents could influence and effect changes in the curriculum to account for local conditions. This could be a reflection of the principal's concern about parental participation in curriculum decision-making discussed earlier. Another principal was concerned about the lack of attention being given to the affective area within the prescribed curriculum. This principal linked the affective area content with the teaching methodology that should be employed by teachers:

> Generally I would like to see system guidelines tighter in respect to curriculum content, especially in the affective area. More active involvement by the kids in the curriculum functions within the rooms, active participation in their learning, not just passive vessels to be filled with knowledge. . . . More attention to the affective area.

Principals were concerned about the expectations that staff placed upon students. Some felt that expectations were not high enough; in the words of one principal, "I sometimes get concerned with staff and the lack of expectations they place on children." However the other side of the same problem--unrealistic expectations--received as much attention. Unrealistic expectations by teachers of students were seen to occur because staff might not have empathy for the home situation of many students. One principal said,

> I have certain teachers on my staff who are always complaining that the children are not completing their homework properly. I ask, "Have you ever gone into the home, where the child is expected to do it? What priority does the parent place on it, etc., etc." Response-"That does not make any difference. If this child is going to be successful, they must do their homework." That one worries me a bit.

The concern was mirrored by another principal who thought unrealistic expectations occurred because staff made judgements about the lives of students. This had a negative effect on what they expected the children to achieve:

> The staff here tend to come from very sheltered middle class backgrounds and have limited life experiences. It is very easy for the teachers from the security of $30 000 a year to make judgements about the lives of the children who come to the school and about the lives of their parents. . . . I don't think that teachers see that they are being prejudiced in their language, discriminatory, or are showing their own personal biases.

This principal thought that such a mindset could have a negative influence on teacher/student interactions within the classrooms. However unrealistic expectations were seen by many principals as more of a problem for teachers who did not really like children and hence were judgmental about them and their lives.

Summary

Principals perceived that their schools were more effective in the development of student social skills than in the development of student creativity; 47.6% of the responses indicated that the development of student creativity and the coordination and continuity of instructional program were only moderately effective or lower.

Some principals saw the necessity for tighter guidelines by the Education Department on the curriculum content to be taught. They thought this would be an advantage to students who changed schools. Tighter guidelines would also allow clearer definition of curriculum areas that could be adapted to reflect local situations and provide a framework for parental participation in curriculum decision-making. This links with the concerns expressed by principals about parental participation in curriculum decision-making discussed in the factor *Parental Support*.

Several principals were concerned about the appropriateness of teacher expectations. Sometimes the expectations about student achievement seemed low; in other cases lack of teacher empathy for the children or lack of empathy for the life experiences of the children and their parents caused this mismatch.

Assessing School Effectiveness

Item 58 of the questionnaire asked principals to nominate the best person or group to judge school effectiveness. Results are displayed in Table 6.3:

Table 6.3

Principal Preferences Concerning Groups Able to Judge the Effectiveness of an Individual School

Group	Frequency
Parents, students, and staff	21
Parents and staff	13
Parents and students	2
Parents	5
School Council	8
School Council, staff, and outside reference group	3
Students	3
Parents, students, staff, and superintendent or two principals	10
External group	6
Principal and superintendent	3
Superintendent	4
Principal	3
Staff	2
	83

Principals specifically mentioned the utilization of parents for judging school effectiveness in five of the groups; this represented 61% of the responses. The percentage increased to 73% when the School Council, predominantly composed of parents, was included. The presence of a superintendent was considered desirable by 16% of the principals, although four thought that two principals could deputize for a superintendent. Principals specifically mentioned themselves as members of the evaluation group six times (7% of the responses), although one would imagine that they probably saw themselves as members of the staff evaluation team. Staff were mentioned as members of the team 49 times (59% of responses). Local business people (3 principals), civic leaders (2 principals) and staff from another school (1 principal) where mentioned by principals as part of the composition of an external group. Only three principals thought that a single person should judge effectiveness; in each case they thought that the judgement should be made by the principal of the school.

Principals were asked for their assessment of the global effectiveness of their school and for an assessment of their personal global effectiveness. Their assessments are reported in Table 6.4:

Table 6.4

Principal Ratings of Global Principal Effectiveness and Global School Effectiveness (n=84)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness(%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
57	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of your school	0.0	2.5	28.4	58.0	11.1	3.78	0.67
83	Would you please rate your overall effectiveness as a principal	0.0	9.9	32.1	38.3	19.8	3.68	0.91

It can be seen that 69% of the principals think that their school is extremely effective or highly effective while 58% think the same way about their personal effectiveness. The next sections of this chapter explore what factors principals may use to judge their effectiveness and school effectiveness.

Predictors of Overall Principal Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to answer research question eight,what factors reported by principals are the best predictors of overall principal effectiveness? Stepwise multiple regression analysis of principals' questionnaire responses produced the results reported in Table 6.5:

Table 6.5

Predictors of Global Principal Effectiveness as Assessed by Principals (n=84)

Predictor in order of entry to the Regression Analysis	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change	Simple R	Beta
Principal as Nexus	0.627	0.393	0.393	0.627	0.627

The factor *Principal as a Nexus* accounted for 39.3% of the variance of the dependent variable and had a correlation coefficient of .627 with overall principal effectiveness. No other factors added significantly to the dependent variable, although *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* did have a correlation coefficient of .525 with overall principal effectiveness. The correlations for the other factors with the dependent variable, global principal effectiveness, ranged from a low of .219 for the factor *Parental Support* to a high of .436 for the factor *Goal Focus*.

During interviews, the factor *Principal as Nexus*, was seen as critical for school effectiveness. Principals, through their effective use of highly developed communication skills articulated and coordinated the development of common goals for the school. The principal then assisted the staff in achieving these goals. Principals indicated that the goals form the measuring stick for the evaluation of staff development and supervision programs. The principal was responsible for spanning the boundary and articulating the school vision. At the same time, principals thought they should be sensitive to the needs of the community and facilitate entry to the school for the community and other government agencies. They were unanimous in thinking that their activities had an overwhelming influence on the achievement of school effectiveness.

Predictors of Overall School Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to answer research question nine, what factors are reported by principals are the best predictors of overall school effectiveness? Stepwise multiple regression analysis of their responses produced the results reported in Table 6.6:

Table 6.6

Predictors of Global School Effectiveness as Assessed by Principals
(n=84)

Predictor in order of entry to the Regression Analysis	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change	Simple R	Beta
Principal as Nexus	0.719	0.516	0.516	0.719	0.719
Goal Emphasis	0.770	0.593	0.077	0.621	0.330
Facilities and Financial Management	0.789	0.623	0.030	0.542	0.201

The variable which contributed most variance (51.6%) in the dependent variable was *Principal as Nexus* ; this variable also correlated strongly (.719) with overall school effectiveness. The second variable, *Goal Emphasis*, added a further 7.7% of the variance, whereas *Facilities and Financial Management* provided a smaller (3.0%) contribution. Although the addition of the factor *Facilities and Financial Management* to the regression analysis was statistically significant, it was not so highly correlated with overall effectiveness (.542). The three factors in combination accounted for 62.3% of the total variance of the dependent variable, global school effectiveness.

During the interviews, principals were adamant that their effectiveness and their activities were highly correlated with school effectiveness. They stressed the need for the principal to develop a collaborative team approach to achieving school goals. The necessity for a principal to have a high level of interpersonal skills, to give meaningful feedback to staff, and to be able to communicate the essential vision to all individuals was frequently stressed. These were aspects of the factor *Principal as Nexus* and gave qualitative support to the findings gained from the statistical analysis of regression.

Relationship between Principal Effectiveness and School Effectiveness

Responses to the questionnaire generated a Pearson correlation coefficient of .553 between the two variables global principal effectiveness and global school effectiveness. In the interviews, principals' opinions ranged from the idea that there was "total" correlation between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness to "I have seen a very effective school with an ineffective principal, so you can't say one therefore follows the other." Some principals cited examples of extremely effective teachers making a school effective but thought that with an effective principal the school would have been extremely effective. This theme was verbalized by two principals:

> I haven't seen too many ineffective principals running effective schools, so I would say the relationship is fairly strong. I can well cite an example of one moderately effective school with an ineffective principal but if you analyze that situation, whilst the staff picked up for his inadequacies, there were pockets of people who ran the school. There was, however, not a common strand, a common purpose; it was more common survival for five years. So it was a good example of staff talent holding the school together, but with an effective principal it could have been a great school.
>
> My headset would say that there is a great correlation except that I have seen good teachers operate where there have been ineffective principals. But an effective school is one that knows what it is on about and knows what it is on about as a collective unit, not as a series of individuals. Therefore there is a high correlation because the principal sets up the machinery so that the school decides what it is on about and then starts the march towards the goals.

The principal being responsible for setting up the vision and managing the movement towards that vision was also mentioned by another principal as part of the reason for the correlation between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness. "Without the principal being effective, I don't think that the school will be. If the delivery is not coordinated, cohesive with purpose, and with good human relations, it is very difficult for the school to be excellent."

Principals were in agreement that there was a positive relationship between school effectiveness and principal effectiveness. In the words of one principal, "I would say that if you liked to identify 20 good, superior, effective schools, I would think that they would have better than your average sample of principals. The best way to improve a school is to improve the quality of the principal."

Summary

The responses of principals to the questionnaire were such that they considered their highest level of effectiveness was for the factor *Facilities and Financial Management*. Within this factor, 85.7% of principals thought that they were highly or extremely effective in setting a school budget with the parents. The development of a budget was seen as an area in which parents had expertise and where meaningful parental participation could occur.

The other components of this factor related to the physical plant. There were generalized conceptions among principals of what a school should look like. They thought that it should be neat and tidy with the external environment indicating care and attention to detail. The inside of the school should be bright and cheerful with children's work prominently displayed. The manner in which visitors were greeted by office staff, students, and teaching staff was also considered an important aspect of the initial impressions people gained upon entry to the school.

In judging the global effectiveness of a principal, the factor *Principal as Nexus* accounted for 39.3% of the overall variance. Within this factor there were three clusters of activities for the principal. The foci were the communication ability of the principal, the establishment of a school vision, and the interaction of the principal with the broader community. Principals were conscious that many facets of their role must be achieved through oral communication and as such they required highly developed interpersonal skills. The establishment of a vision required principals to persistently and consistently articulate a personal vision for the school. From this articulation and personal modelling, principals saw that it was possible to coalesce the staff to reach an agreed-upon central vision for the school and to generate a team approach for the achievement of that vision. The vision was the yardstick by which all things were measured and formed the basis for an effective staff supervision program. Strengths and weaknesses of staff were measured against the requirements needed for achieving the vision. Principals indicated that a staff development program should be established to facilitate the attainment of the vision. This staff development program should have two components: a personal learning program for each staff member and a total school program for the enhancement of the team's ability to achieve the school goals. The principals' approach to their personal learning was a powerful model to staff, students, and parents. Principals believed that their personal practice must be congruent with their verbal exhortations to staff.

The best predictors of the global effectiveness of a school were the factors *Principal as Nexus, Goal Emphasis,* and *Facilities and Financial Management.* These three factors accounted for 62.3% of the total variance in the dependent variable global school effectiveness. Although 91.4% of principals thought parents should participate in the setting of school goals, principals were divided as to the degree of this participation. There were concerns that parents did not have the professional knowledge required for meaningful participation. Principals thought that superficial participation of parents could be a means of undermining the professional knowledge of the staff. Irrespective of opinion about the level of parental participation, all principals saw that there were many positive benefits for a school that resulted from that participation: communication between the school and home improved, both parents and teachers came to an improved understanding of the problems and issues confronting each other, children benefitted from witnessing the team efforts, the skill level of parents increased and the school influenced the wider community.

Principals saw a positive relationship between the effectiveness of a principal and the effectiveness of the school. Questionnaire responses generated a Pearson correlation coefficient of .553 between the two dependent variables, principal effectiveness and school effectiveness. Most principals thought that the best way to improve a school was to improve the effectiveness of the principal, although several mentioned that the principal needed a greater say in the selection of staff as part of this school improvement.

Principals saw that staff needed to have a primary focus on the social development and academic attainment of individual children within their classroom but this could not be at the exclusion of concern for the activities of the total school. It was seen that the development of a team approach to the achievement of school goals was necessary. All principals saw that they were ultimately responsible for all of the activities within a school; one prime responsibility was the supervision of staff, seen as a way of tacitly valuing their work while at the same time generating visibility of the principal for all staff and students. The interactions during the supervisory process allowed the principal to give praise for effort and deeds, to model appropriate behavior, to reinforce the necessity to achieve school goals, and to gather information about strengths and weaknesses within the school. An awareness of staff strengths and weaknesses allowed for the development of an effective staff development program. Such a program had two components. As part of the first component, the school could capitalize on the strengths of the staff and utilize them for the total school development program. The second component of a staff development program required principals to negotiate with individual teachers about each teacher's personal learning and growth. The approach of principals to their own ongoing learning was seen to be a powerful role model for all of the adults within the school and an indication of the importance principals placed on staff development.

Principals were unanimous in acknowledging the need for a variety of strategies for assessing student work and for reporting the progress to both the students and parents. While 73.3% of them thought their schools were highly effective or extremely effective in reporting student progress and attainment to parents, 36.1% of principals thought that the monitoring of student progress and feedback to the student was moderately effective or worse. Principals indicated the assessment methods used should be part of the immediate teaching/learning interaction and clearly understood by the child.

Principals reported that their schools were more effective in the development of student social skills than with the development of student creativity. Both the development of student creativity and the coordination of the continuity of the instructional program were seen by 47.6% of principals to be only moderately effective or lower. Student happiness was believed to be crucial to perceptions of school effectiveness, and this was in a large part influenced by the quality of the teacher/student interactions. Several principals thought that student participation in decision-making was linked to student morale and that there should be a greater focus on student decision-making within the classrooms.

CHAPTER 7

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: SUPERINTENDENT PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Superintendents' perceptions of important aspects of school effectiveness and principal effectiveness are reported in this chapter. They were each asked to select three schools from within their district--one they classified as ineffective, one moderately effective, and one very effective--and rate the effectiveness level of the three schools on 79 individual items within the questionnaire. The statistical results are reported as are the superintendents' opinions about the appropriate person or group to make judgements about the effectiveness of a principal or individual school. Discussion then centers on superintendents' thoughts about the relationship between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness. Statistical stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to identify the set of factors that best predict the overall effectiveness of a principal and the overall effectiveness of a school; these results are reported.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on the following research questions which in part guided this study:

Question 11. How do superintendents rate the effectiveness of schools on important criteria of effectiveness?

Question 12. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of superintendents' global ratings of principal effectiveness?

Question 13. What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of superintendents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

Question 14. What is the relationship between superintendents' global ratings of principal effectiveness and superintendents' global ratings of school effectiveness?

The presentation in this chapter is similar to the previous two chapters. Both quantitative and qualitative data are presented in order to provide a more complete description of numerical findings to which are added the responses gleaned from the interview data and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire data. This is called for to reveal the difference of opinion among the superintendents. All the quotations contained within this chapter are the recorded words of eight superintendents interviewed from September 12 to September 28, 1988.

Superintendents' Perceptions of School and Principal Effectiveness on Important Factors for School Effectiveness

In responding to the questionnaire, superintendents made judgements about the effectiveness of each school or principal for each of the 79 items. The scale ranged from not effective (1), through slightly effective, moderately effective, highly effective to extremely effective (5). The responses were tallied and the mean scores and standard deviations for each school effectiveness factor were calculated. These are reported in Table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1

Superintendents' Effectiveness Ratings on the School Effectiveness Factors (n=57)

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
Facilities and Financial Management	3.50	0.93
Student Centeredness	3.35	0.97
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	3.27	1.17
Academic Program Focus	3.24	1.04
Principal as Nexus	3.21	1.26
Parental Support	3.20	1.26
Goal Emphasis	3.14	1.26

The percentage frequencies of superintendent responses to the effectiveness of principals and schools on each of the forty items used in the factor analysis are reported in Table 7.2. For the interest of readers the response frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations for all items in the questionnaire are given in Table D.5 and are reported in Appendix D.

Caution should be used when looking at the frequency distribution of effectiveness responses of each item for superintendents at the same time as those of principals and parents. The superintendents were instructed to select designated schools--one school that could be classified as ineffective, one as moderately effective and one as very effective--whereas principals and parents were responding and rating their own school. A percentage of the total number of parent and principal responses were such that some schools were given non effective or extremely effective overall ratings, but the distribution does not compare with the sample superintendents were requested to use.

Table 7.1 shows that the factor means range from 3.50 for *Facilities and Financial Management* to a low of 3.14 for *Goal Emphasis*. This indicates that schools--whether not effective, moderately effective, or very effective--perform better within the areas covered by the *Facilities and Financial Management* factor than in other areas. The standard deviation for this factor also indicated a closer grouping of effectiveness scores.

Given that the means are a reflection of scores aggregated from a selection of non-effective, moderately effective, and very effective schools, the frequency distribution of responses for individual items within each factor is more indicative of the differences between operational aspects of effective and non-effective schools. These aspects will be discussed within each factor.

Principal as Nexus

Superintendents were consistent in stressing the importance of the actions of the principal. Effective communication and interpersonal skills were seen as necessary crucial

Table 7.2

Superintendent Ratings of the Effectiveness of Schools on Important Effectiveness Items
(n = 57)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness(%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 1: Principal as Nexus								
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	8.8	19.3	17.5	28.1	26.3	3.44	1.31
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	8.8	21.1	14.0	31.6	24.6	3.42	1.31
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	15.8	14.0	15.8	24.6	29.8	3.39	1.45
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	8.8	26.3	12.3	28.1	24.6	3.33	1.34
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	14.0	15.8	19.3	24.6	26.3	3.33	1.39
75	Maintaining an open school climate	14.5	14.5	23.6	20.0	27.3	3.31	1.40
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	10.5	28.1	12.3	22.8	26.3	3.26	1.40
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	17.9	19.6	10.7	23.2	28.6	3.25	1.51
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	15.8	12.3	24.6	29.8	17.5	3.21	1.32
62	Principal acting as a role model	22.8	14.0	12.3	22.8	28.1	3.19	1.55
65	Principal keeping up to date with new teaching methods	17.5	19.3	15.8	28.1	19.3	3.12	1.40
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	20.0	20.0	14.5	20.0	25.5	3.11	1.50
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	8.8	24.6	29.8	26.3	10.5	3.05	1.14
70	Providing feedback to staff members	24.6	15.8	21.1	19.3	19.3	2.93	1.46
71	Improving the work of staff members	31.6	7.0	29.8	22.8	8.8	2.70	1.36
Factor 2: Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff								
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	0.0	28.1	24.6	19.3	28.1	3.47	1.18
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	5.3	17.5	29.8	26.3	21.1	3.40	1.16
27	Staff keeping up to date with new teaching methods	5.3	22.8	26.3	28.1	17.5	3.30	1.16
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	15.8	14.0	21.1	28.1	21.1	3.25	1.37
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	10.5	21.1	21.1	31.6	15.8	3.21	1.25
28	Teachers willing to consider change	7.0	26.3	21.1	29.8	15.8	3.21	1.21
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	10.5	22.8	21.1	28.1	17.5	3.19	1.27
23	High staff morale	15.8	21.1	17.5	19.3	26.3	3.19	1.45
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	21.1	19.3	8.8	24.6	26.3	3.16	1.53

continued

Table 7.2 (continued)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factor 3: Student Centeredness								
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	0.0	15.8	28.1	33.3	22.8	3.63	1.01
16	High student morale	5.3	14.0	29.8	26.3	24.6	3.51	1.17
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	5.3	15.8	26.3	35.1	17.5	3.44	1.12
22	A student behavior management program	15.8	12.3	17.5	36.8	17.5	3.28	1.33
21	High student satisfaction with the school	8.8	14.0	35.1	26.3	15.8	3.26	1.16
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	8.8	26.3	28.1	31.6	5.3	2.98	1.08
Factor 4: Facilities and Financial Management								
45	Well-maintained school grounds and facilities	0.0	8.8	28.1	31.6	31.6	3.86	0.97
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	3.5	22.8	22.8	29.8	21.1	3.42	1.17
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	12.3	19.3	19.3	31.6	17.5	3.23	1.30
Factor 5: Goal Emphasis								
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff & parents	17.5	26.3	14.0	29.8	12.3	2.93	1.33
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	10.5	19.3	17.5	29.8	22.8	3.35	1.32
Factor 6: Parental Support								
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	8.8	21.1	21.1	36.8	12.3	3.23	1.18
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	16.1	23.2	14.3	21.4	25.0	3.16	1.45
Factor 7: Academic Program Focus								
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	1.8	21.1	22.8	28.1	26.3	3.56	1.15
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	7.0	26.3	31.6	21.1	14.0	3.09	1.15
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program	14.0	17.5	26.3	31.6	10.5	3.07	1.22

base skills. As one superintendent indicated, superintendents "obviously place a great deal of importance on the level of interpersonal relationships." While stressing the need for competency in this aspect, superintendents acknowledged that "there is a real danger in that because we could say, 'Ha ha, so human relation is the most important skill,' but it is a base skill that assists the other dimensions. It gets you to first base." This was reiterated by the superintendent who said, "You can have all this knowledge up here [tapping head] about supervision, and what motivates people and curriculum fields, paradigms, and all of that sort of stuff. However if you can't listen to people and don't have those people skills the rest will not work." Several superintendents indicated that interpersonal skills could be learnt but it was a time-consuming task. As one superintendent said, "They are the hardest spots of all to change. . . . You probably only really lighten or darken the spots of the beast in some instances rather than change the color of them altogether. However, you have got to try." Many of the superintendents thought that basic to strong interpersonal skill development was, in the words of one superintendent, "a liking for people and a real genuine respect for them as equivalent minds, hearts, and that kind of stuff." Superintendents thought that good interpersonal skills were linked to a positive self-concept. A person was more likely to listen attentively and give credence to another's point of view when personally secure. Security within one's self facilitated the interaction with others and assisted with meaningful dialogue. Dialogue was the basis for the development of consensus about the purpose or vision for the school; a central purpose was seen as "conducive to good productive outcomes." Superintendents thought that concern with the nature of the outcomes was one of the indicators of an effective school.

Superintendents signified that item 61--the ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school--was important. They all agreed that a principal must be able to articulate a vision for the school and then influence the staff to want to achieve that vision. It was not necessary that the principal's vision dominate; but without a personal ability to declare goals for the school, the formulation of a joint agreed-upon vision was not likely.

The consistent, persistent articulation of a purpose for the school by the principal established a set of influencing factors. According to one superintendent, influencing factors included an ability "to articulate the vision, include people in the vision, and set up an atmosphere of trust; providing the motives are fine, we will tolerate learning, relearning, retraining, risk-taking etc., etc. You can only really influence if you are influencing people for better reasons, for better purposes."

Getting an agreed-upon purpose for the school increased the level of trust within the school. People were then more certain of where they could contribute. One superintendent said:

> When a school staff as well as the parent and student body are in agreement with what their purpose is, then other things flow from it. For example, how do we achieve the stated purpose? What kind of environment do we need to create, and what kinds of conditions will facilitate it? What kinds of conditions will inhibit it? From that I believe the culture, or if you like the climate, of the school will best be developed.

As the trust level escalated, so the climate improved. Superintendents responded in such a way that the effectiveness level of the degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other staff members had the fourth lowest mean score (3.11) for all items within the factor *Principal as Nexus*. An analysis of the distribution of responses indicated superintendents thought that 54.5% of principals were moderately effective, slightly effective, or not effective at generating the appropriate level of trust. Trust levels were seen as indicative of the climate within a school.

In the words of one superintendent, an appropriate climate was one where "people are known, recognized, acknowledged and valued for the people that they are;" and the superintendents consistently indicated that 47.3% of principals were highly effective or extremely effective at maintaining an open school climate. Many superintendents indicated that they knew as soon as they walked into a school if the climate was appropriate. One superintendent summarized the thoughts of most by saying, "You go in and people look at you, smile: kids--teachers--ancillary staff--parents--anybody just makes you feel welcome. People in there feel good about themselves." Superintendents thought a positive self-concept was inherent in a school that had a good climate. Individuals had a sense of personal security and this was enhanced when the principal got to know the staff both professionally and socially. As indicated by one superintendent, "A good school climate is one where there is a lot of fun, a lot of conversation, where people are relaxed with each other and respect each other and every body is busy, but also concerned with the quality of the output." Superintendents felt that it was important for people to feel good about what they were doing. They frequently indicated during the interviews that they looked for happy faces, cheerful body language, and humor in the classrooms and staff room.

Superintendents thought that where the climate was warm, open, and trust was evident, staff supervision was not an area of concern. People saw supervision as an essential part of their professional growth and development. One superintendent indicated that a good principal will

> help the teachers to grow and I believe that growing teachers will critically examine themselves, their beliefs, their methodologies, and their outcomes. They will always need a good, critical friend, an appraiser to achieve this. I believe that with evaluation as a positive thing, classroom practice will improve.

The effectiveness of schools in the processes of staff improvement and staff development was of concern to superintendents. This was reflected in their responses to item 71 of the questionnaire.

Improving the work of staff members, item 71, with a mean score of 2.70 was the lowest for all items, within the factor *Principal as Nexus*. With 8.8% of responses in the highly effective category, this factor had the second-lowest percentage in this category of response for all items in all factors. The item had the lowest combination of responses in the highly effective and extremely effective categories. Superintendents saw a link between supervision and staff development and thought that an effective supervision program was a prerequisite to an excellent staff development program. To be able to encourage and assist staff with their personal development it was thought necessary for principals to know staff strengths and weaknesses and to give feedback to them. This knowledge required an effective supervision program. Item 70, providing feedback to staff members, had the second lowest mean of all items within this factor. Superintendents thought that 61.5% of principals were not, slightly, or moderately effective at giving the required feedback.

Superintendents were unanimous that staff supervision was essential for school effectiveness and saw effective action in this area as a crucial component of the principal's role. They thought supervision was critical for a number of reasons. Firstly, as one superintendent indicated,

> teachers want feedback. They enjoy it. Supervision is a support structure and teachers have the right to be supervised, so teachers know what their strengths are, what areas they have to develop. Teachers need to know that they have support with what they want to have happen in their careers--counselling stuff, what moves to make. If teachers feel that they are achieving and feel good about being in the school, you will then get your most effective outcomes for the school.

Secondly, supervision assisted with the translation of the goals, or the processes necessary for the attainment of the goals, being put into practice. It was the responsibility of the principal to give feedback to the teacher about the teacher's performance in achieving the total school goals. One superintendent used the analogy of an orchestra conductor: "There are a lot of players, each with a contribution to make but if they make that contribution in isolation from one another and without the advantage of a score, which I would say is a school plan, one is likely to get disharmony, discontinuity etc." It was the principal's responsibility to know which instrument to use at the appropriate time and how to blend the individual sounds for the enhancement of the final product. Supervision of the work of teachers in the classroom was required for principals to learn of teacher strengths so that these could be effectively utilized for the benefit of the whole school.

A third reason for supervision was the enormous progress that could be made from a collaborative supervision program. Many superintendents spoke about the Glickman (1981) concept of developmental supervision and the necessary link between supervision and professional development. Several superintendents were concerned because "We suffer from the mindset that supervision is often seen as checking up. For me it means to assist a person's professional and personal growth. Really supervision and professional development are very tied together. It is negotiated, it's not laid down." Supervision was seen as an essential component of a personal growth program. Superintendents believed that principals needed to be aware of staff strengths and weaknesses if principals were to play any part in advising and assisting staff in areas requiring improvement or indicating to teachers how they could capitalize on their personal strengths. Superintendents thought supervision was welcomed by professional teachers.

Fourthly, supervision supplied many positive messages about the principal to the teachers and the children. Superintendents acknowledged that teachers in primary schools

> are inside their classroom for most of the working day and it is very difficult to know what it is that the principal actually does. Albeit there is a tremendous amount of work that principals do that is outside of classrooms, but teachers basically judge principals on what they see of them with kids and at staff meetings.

Superintendents also indicated that the principal's presence in the classrooms reinforced the importance of teachers' work. It allowed the principal to interact with students and teachers in their domain and to model appropriate behaviors for them.

A fifth reason for stressing the principal's role in supervision was the system requirements for supervision. A superintendent said, "One can't forget the necessity of supervising teachers on probation, teachers preparing for an assessment or for special positions where they require concrete evidence of a personal developmental program." Some superintendents spoke about the legal difficulties in removing an incompetent teacher. The probationary period was seen to be an important filter that had not always been as effective as superintendents desired. Selection of the best people for promotion was also seen to be crucial, and detailed knowledge of the ability of individual applicants was not currently a strength of the system's promotion process. Superintendents believed that improvement could be made in this area and the improvement was linked to effective supervision programs.

Irrespective of the reason for supervision, there was a general feeling that, as said by one superintendent,

> Every one needs to be treated the same way in terms of time. No I will try that again--in terms of recognition and support. The nature of that and how the supervision is done will vary depending of the skills and ability of the teacher and also the skills and abilities of the principal. . . . But how and what is done is critical. It needs to be supportive with negotiation, discussion, and planning.

Superintendents frequently mentioned that all staff should have a personal growth and supervision program. Ancillary and support staff people were a valuable resource within a school and should also receive attention for all of the reasons indicated above. As summarized by one superintendent, "ongoing supervision for *all* staff (emphasis given by interviewee) is absolutely crucial and underdone."

Superintendents indicated that an effective supervision program is one way of reinforcing the high expectations that a principal has for a school. The reinforcing of expectations with all people involved within the school facilitated the continual focussing of efforts on the achievement of the school vision. One superintendent saw that the link between vision and expectation was the mark of an effective school. This superintendent said,

> The prime indicator of effectiveness is that there is a defined purpose within the school and that it is shared, that people know where they are going, that there are high expectations by the principal of staff, by superintendent of principals, by staff of students, and by parents of their local school.

The continual emphasis on expectations can be augmented by the modelling provided by the principal. Whatever the principal does was considered an espousing of operational policy. When principals acted so there was congruence between their articulation and practice, clarity of purpose was seen by those around them. This in turn could raise the output of all personnel associated with the school. The messages being conveyed by actions were seen as particularly important for the principal in his/her dealing with the wider community. When outside of the school, interacting with business people or civic leaders, principals are under the microscope. They are giving messages about their school and the education system in general. The same applies to any school group on an excursion from the school. Judgements about the standards within the system and school are extrapolated from general observations of behavior and demeanor of the students and teachers. The judgements being made were of concern to superintendents.

One superintendent wished to clarify a perception that principals were totally responsible for the quality of education within the schools. The superintendent thought that just as staff needed leadership, so did principals; and the people responsible for the provision of leadership for principals had not consistently modelled appropriate behavior and actions.

> Many of our people at higher levels could do with some retraining and ongoing skill development. Our senior people are so busy that they tend to think that professional development is for every one below them. The tragedy is that we have a lot of aspiring leaders who are modelling themselves on these senior people who may be exhibiting inappropriate practices.

At the same time, superintendents acknowledged that it was not just the people in hierarchical positions above superintendents that were not modelling appropriately. Two superintendents were of the same opinion, and in the words of one, they and their colleagues could do well to look at the

> meetings we hold which are too full of "administrivia." We don't model the provision of energy to the attainment of goals at our meetings. We let other things intrude. It is poor practice. Maybe superintendents should reflect on what we are modelling at our meetings by analyzing the agendas. The content reflects the priority, not the articulation.

Superintendents thought that the actions of principals were critical to the attainment of effectiveness within schools but they should be supported by superiors who modeled appropriate behavior and whose activities were congruent with their expectations of the principals.

Summary

Superintendents were unanimous as to the importance of the role of *Principal as Nexus*. They were of the opinion that the operational style of the principal set the tone for what occurred within the school. No one style was seen as a prerequisite for an effective school, but there were components of a skills repertoire that were essential. The first mentioned by all superintendents was the necessity for principals to have sound interpersonal skills. This included the ability to listen carefully to other people without becoming defensive and the ability to communicate with a wide range of people. Many thought that a fundamental requirement underpinning the development of these skills was a genuine concern for and liking of people. If this was associated with a secure self-concept, then professional development courses enhanced the skill level of the individual principal. Most were of the opinion that although interpersonal skills could be learnt, a great deal of time and effort were required and the whole affective area was the most difficult area in which to produce change for an individual principal.

A second major requirement for school effectiveness was a supportive, warm, open school climate. Such a climate generated trust between people and could enhance a supportive supervision program. All superintendents saw that a supervision program for all staff was essential. It assisted in the achievement of the school goals and in the individual professional development of people. Supervision facilitated internalization of the high expectations principals should have of the people that work with them. By having an active supervision program, principals were frequently in the classrooms and could therefore give powerful messages to staff and students. Modelling by the principal was an influential way to maintaining a focus on the achievement of school goals.

Superintendents were consistent in their thoughts that the actions of the principal when operating within the wider context were critical. Many individuals extrapolated from observation of or participation in these interactions and then made judgements about the school or the system in general.

Superintendents saw principals as the single most important component for the generation of an effective school. Principals have the power to influence most of the activities that occur within their schools, and this perturbed one superintendent because, "Principals have such a worrisome amount of power over the lives of children and teachers. They can make their life hell for 200 days a year, and it is invariably traceable to their own attitude." An effective school, therefore, required a principal who was "a positive person, committed to the job, with a high energy level" and able to use his/her skills so that others would work towards enhancing the achievement of the school's goals.

Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff

Superintendents stressed the importance of having qualified, committed, professional teachers in the schools. They were of the opinion that teacher quality was showing consistent improvement, but ongoing training and development at both the school and individual teacher level was a continuing priority. With committed, competent, professional staff, it was much easier to produce a united school focus on the collaborative learning required for the improvement of the school and the movement necessary for the attainment of school goals. The consensual development of a school vision or goals was seen by superintendents as central to the production of an ongoing cooperative effort within a school.

Competent teachers were more prepared to accept the challenge of their practice, reflect on it, and plan for self-improvement. Superintendents thought that it was a principal's responsibility to engender staff preparedness to consider change. Change would occur by reflection on what the school stood for, by a declaration of that purpose, and then by an articulation of how the school would move towards that vision. To expect full staff participation, it was thought necessary to have a cooperative decision-making policy in place. This required a principal to display a management style that was, in the words of one superintendent, "directed towards people taking control, people becoming independent. I believe far too much in the past we have operated in a way that has made people dependent." Each person within a school should know the part he/she plays in the decision-making process and how to successfully influence decisions that are made.

Involvement in decision-making gives a sense of control over one's destiny and this increases the level of job satisfaction. The provision of adequate time for school planning, staff development, and staff participation in decision-making activities was of concern to superintendents.

One superintendent thought that school-based people had an inordinate amount of holiday time and "principals and teachers should be required to use some of this time for their ongoing professional development." It should be possible to schedule professional development activities to avoid the summer holiday period "but have courses provided in the other holiday periods so that selection is possible without interfering in family holiday arrangements." Several superintendents mentioned that there was insufficient system recognition of the value of professional development, and this would need to escalate before holiday courses would become popular.

Several superintendents expressed the view that improved staff morale occurred when staff perceived that the principal knew them as individuals, when the principal knew of their feelings about school and knew of their personal lives. One superintendent indicated that principals need

> to know how teachers feel about their work in the classrooms and how they feel about being in the classrooms, about being part of the school--even some home background stuff. So if you know your folks in a school to that extent, and I am not suggesting here that you have to live in each other's pockets because this is quite feasible within the normal school hours, if you do know them then you will know what is troubling teachers in general and what is having a bearing on morale.

Consideration and allowance could then be made for occasions when the outside life of a staff member had some negative effect on the performance of his/her duties.

Summary

Superintendents saw that the quality of staff affected the ease with which a principal could improve the effectiveness of a school. Dedicated, committed, professional staff members could more easily assist a principal in the provision of a quality program for the children. Reflective teachers were thought more willing to be involved in a school development program as well as involved in a personal professional development program. The provision of adequate time was crucial, and one superintendent thought that vacation time could be utilized for professional development.

Staff and parent participation in decision-making was seen as important. The decision-making policy of a school was a very important document and was seen as essential by superintendents. In the words of one superintendent, it is essential "Teachers and parents understand the decision-making and/or change processes within the school. I think it is the most important document or policy within the school." Participation in decision-making was thought to lead to a sense of control over one's destiny and this was linked to job satisfaction and morale. As indicated earlier, superintendents thought happy, committed teachers were essential for maximizing student welfare. The personal happiness of teachers flowed into their interactions with the students and helped produce happy students.

Student Centeredness

The first major focus of comments by superintendents in this factor was the assessment and reporting procedures used by schools. Superintendents were consistent in stressing the importance of the student evaluative processes and accompanying reporting methods used by schools. Most considered it necessary for schools to use multiple methods of assessing student work. One superintendent summarized this by saying, "Increasingly I am of the view that single methods of assessment are inappropriate, because they can only assess single components of the curriculum area. Effective schools are using multiple methods appropriate to specific aspects of the curriculum." However, basic to the assessing system was a clear understanding of what the school and individual curriculum area was attempting to achieve. One superintendent indicated that "the school needs to be very clear in its goals, because if we are going to monitor and evaluate we need to know what it is we are trying to do. Sometimes we haven't always got that right." When goals were understood, then attention could be given to the appropriate methods of assessment that should be used. One superintendent was of the opinion that "we sometimes get too bogged down with the part that goes home to parents or the interview aspect. If an analysis of any one school's assessment procedures is conducted, one will find a minimum of ten activities that form it." Assessment was seen to be multi-faceted and superintendents though it should be more closely interwoven with the teaching methodologies being used.

Several superintendents thought that "parents sometimes want things different from what the teachers want to give. Parents often feel most comfortable when they see 10/20 or some grade--A,B,C, D--and less comfortable with, 'so and so is working to his/her potential'." Nevertheless the discussion on the format or process that was appropriate must include parent input and the final product must be "in forms that have been negotiated."

Superintendents stressed that the final format should also include discussion with students, because their understanding of the process being used was crucial. In fact assessment should not be separated from the teaching/learning process. One summarized the thoughts of many superintendents when he/she said, the assessment process should be a

> cooperative system between teacher and the child and they should jointly work out the specific objectives of a particular exercise or group of lessons that is going to be followed for a fortnight or month. I think the teacher has the right to set some specific individual and class objectives. The child should be involved in setting those objectives. These should be on the report and then shown to parents.

Most of the superintendents thought that schools and teachers could be more effective when negotiating with students about the curriculum and in the level of personal feedback given to each student. Item 18--monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students--received only 5.3% of the superintendents' responses in the highly effective category. This was the lowest response in this category for any item in all factors. Several superintendents thought that samples of children's work should be sent home or be available at parent/teacher interviews. Most thought that in the ideal world, communication between the home and the school would be continuous. As one superintendent said,

> I think that some of the most valuable feedback to parents is the kind that occurs at the classroom door, inside the classroom on a very regular basis, a very informal basis as the parent comes to pick up the kids. It is easier with young kids, because parents are often there. Hence there can be an almost daily communication about what is going on.

Given that the parent contact with the school diminished as the children got older and therefore parent contact with the teacher declined, several superintendents were high in their praise of schools which contacted parents by telephone to report on positive aspects of a child's progress. Irrespective of the communication process, superintendents thought there was the need for a regular, structured, parent/teacher interview with sufficient time set aside to have meaningful dialogue during the interview. Three superintendents praised schools which had a process that gave parents some prior indication of what the teacher wished to talk about at the interview. This also allowed the parents to think about issues they wished to raise. A successful parent/teacher interview required skillful handling by the teacher if it was to be of benefit to both parties. According to one superintendent, a lack of defensiveness by teachers could encourage "openness and truthfulness. It is not the teacher or the parent who is under the microscope. Both parties are really concerned about the kid and are contributing. Two brains can work out where next and how next for the child." The concept of a partnership between the school and the home for the benefit of the child was mentioned by all superintendents and was a factor linked with the importance of parental participation in schools. This will be covered later in this section.

Superintendents were consistent in believing that even if interviews were held, some form of written feedback about the progress of a child needed to be given to the parents . Two suggested that it should be a written resume of the actual conversation during the interview, and one superintendent said that "parents do like to have something in writing. Dad says to Mum when she gets home "Well what did the teacher say?' or they want to show grandma, etc."

The second major thrust of comments by superintendents within this factor was a focus on behavior management programs in schools. This was important to superintendents because failures in this area often caused parents to contact them about the actions of schools. One superintendent indicated that the predominant cause of parents contacting the office "was conflict between parent and teacher that had an initial focus on some sort of behavioral problem where the child had rebelled and was resisting the action prescribed, and the parent sees that the child's rights are involved." When they came to see the superintendent there was frequently a high degree of anger displayed by the parents and a sense of frustration with the school's initial response to their concern. This will be discussed under parental interventions in Chapter 10.

One superintendent regretted the approach taken by the South Australian education system with its emphasis on each school developing a student behavior management program. "We have got ourselves into a deficit orientation. In my view, this suggests a reactive head-set to it rather than student management in all of its positive modes." Superintendents saw that central to the management of the behavior of students was an acceptance of the rights of students. One said, "Kids have greater rights than they have ever had and they exercise the rights. This cuts across the traditional power base of teachers." The superintendent thought that teachers who had not modified their style were "more predominant in the complaint scenario. . . . [This] is a trend that is ever on the increase." Hence superintendents saw that it was necessary for principals to "work with teachers to determine the nature of student/teacher interaction. Is the interaction based on the teacher in a position of power with students having no rights, or is there genuine negotiation between teacher and learner in terms of the structure of the curriculum and the classroom processes and organization?" The former approach was considered to be inappropriate by most superintendents. One superintendent hypothesized that the teachers who had not modified their teaching style to give cognizance to the rights of students were more likely to suffer stress and seek the assistance of personnel in the "stress unit" of the Education Department. Superintendents thought that if a school wished to avoid a negative policing approach to discipline in the development of a student behavior management program, then it was essential for principals to work with staff to identify appropriate student/teacher interaction patterns. One superintendent indicated that the Primary Education Review within the state of South Australia conducted during 1986-87 had completed a student survey. Contained in the findings of this survey was students' concern for the relationships they had with their peers and teachers. Students disliked fighting and arguing with their peers and were most anxious, in the words of one student, to"get along well with their teacher." The superintendent indicated that these findings should be given cognizance by all principals and teachers.

Summary

Superintendents focussed on two main components of this factor. Firstly they saw that the methods of assessing and reporting student progress was essential to school effectiveness. Secondly they saw that the management of student behavior was pivotal. Dissatisfaction with this aspect of a school's performance frequently prompted parents to contact superintendents.

Superintendents thought that no one form of assessing student work was appropriate. With a clear understanding of the various curricula objectives, it was possible to use appropriate strategies to assess children's work within a specific curriculum. Children should be involved in negotiating the processes to be used, because their understanding of the processes was crucial to teacher/learner interactions.

Superintendents were of the opinion that the format used to report student progress to parents should be negotiated with the parents. However, schools sometimes get too bogged down in this aspect of the process to the detriment of more important assessing and reporting issues. Superintendents were emphatic that a focus must be maintained on the relationship between the assessment of work and the learning it measured.

Most superintendents favoured a blend of parent/teacher interviews and written reports. All thought that if interviews were held, then they should be of sufficient duration to encourage meaningful dialogue. Praise was given to schools that gave parents advance information about the topics to be discussed during the interview. This gave parents time to prepare for the exchange of information. Superintendents admitted that successful parent/teacher interviews required skilled teachers. All thought that some form of written information should accompany or follow the interview.

Effective student behavior management was seen as vital for school effectiveness. The quality of the student-teacher interaction was crucial for this to be effective. Acquiescence to student rights have changed significantly in the last decade, and the nature of the student/teacher interaction should reflect this. Conflicts and non-resolved difficulties in this area were a frequent cause of parents contacting the district office seeking the assistance of the superintendent for a resolution of the concern.

Facilities and Financial Management

All superintendents who answered the questionnaire were of the opinion that the school budget should be set with the participation of staff and parents. During the interviews, superintendents indicated that parents had many skills in financial management and schools were missing valuable opportunities for parental participation if they did not utilize this expertise. Responses to the questionnaire indicated that both effective and less effective schools rated well on maintenance of school grounds and facilities. Only 8.8% of schools were rated in the "not effective" or "slightly effective" categories. This was the lowest for any item in any factor. Internal environment was frequently linked to climate as one of its indicators. The appearance of the internal foyers and hallways has "to do with feeling, how you feel when you walk into the place. Is it a nice place? In some schools you walk into the foyer and there is stuff up all around the place. It shows pride in the kids' work and that this work is valued enough to be displayed." Superintendents interviewed seemed to promulgate a sense of what a school should look like. The external environment should be tidy and display a sense of pride in the facilities. Age of the buildings was not a concern, but neatness was. It was accepted that money was tight for urgent minor repairs, but some schools seemed to manage this aspect better than others. When one enters the main foyer, a sense of welcome should pervade. People should be willing to approach strangers and offer assistance; smiling faces should be in evidence. The manner of the front office people was crucial to this sense of welcome. Bright colors and displays of children's work added to the welcome and reflected a sense of pride in the achievements of the students and reminded visitors of the central purpose of the school. If the displays were eye-catching the first time, they were remembered; therefore non-changing displays were counterproductive. When people left the main office to go to other parts of the school, assistance in getting there was usually appreciated. While moving to that location, many judgements were subconsciously made by visitors as they take in their surroundings. Litter or poorly stored equipment in cluttered corridors does the school a disservice. Superintendents indicated that the behavior and demeanor of the children were important; if lessons were in progress, a sense of order and calm added to the positive image for the school.

Goal Emphasis

Superintendent responses to item one in the questionnaire--school goals set cooperatively with staff and parents--were such that 43.8% of them rated school performance as not effective or slightly effective. This was the highest level of responses in the lower end of the effectiveness continuum for all items in all factors. In the questionnaire responses, all but one superintendent thought that parents and staff should participate in setting the goals. This was a reflection of superintendent concern for school sensitivity to the parent community. Superintendents stressed the importance of this practice during the interviews.

In the interviews, the superintendents were unanimous in stressing the importance of schools having clearly defined goals. They thought that the principal played an important role in the setting of the school goals because without a principal's persistent articulation of a central purpose for the school's, the process of developing school goals withered and the school became directionless. Nonetheless, the establishment of goals to aim for was but part of the giving a focus to the activities of the school. Once the goals were confirmed, it was necessary to articulate an action plan for achieving them. This then provided the focus against which to judge the performance of the school and the part played by the individuals within the school. It was the mirror required to reflect strengths and weaknesses within the school. Superintendents generally saw schools as ineffective in publicly declaring their action plans and evaluative strategies. However, they conceded that the Education Department had been remiss in also not doing this and so had not provided effective modelling. Rectification of this omission was seen to be a system priority for the next five years.

Parental Support

Superintendents were unanimous in declaring the factor *Parental Support* as important aspect of the operation of an effective school. Responses to item 38--enlisting the support of parent bodies--received only 12.3% of extremely effective responses. This was the third-lowest rating in this category for all items in all factors. As reported earlier it reflected superintendent sensitivity to the need for schools to involve parents in the formulation of school goals.

Superintendents saw parental support as synonymous with parental participation or parent involvement. They considered the involvement of parents a benefit to the students and promoted congruent messages to the children about the importance of education. Parental support fostered teamwork between the parents and the school so that the education of the child became the concern of the home/school team. All superintendents were careful in confirming the difference between involvement and genuine participation. One summarized the difference with a delightful analogy: "Said the pig to the hen, 'When the farmer decides to have bacon and eggs for breakfast, you are involved but I am participating'." The superintendent continued by saying "When you are participating, you risk your skin in. You take some responsibility for the decisions that are made. When you are involved you can say well I told them but they took no notice." All superintendents agreed with the one who said, "'Participate' means the capacity to contribute to decision-making at the highest level of the continuum, whereas 'involvement' can be more at the other end where it comes in the form of assistance, or an extra pair of hands, voluntary work, etc."

Three superintendents, though supporting an increase in the level of parental participation, saw that a degree of caution was necessary in both the rate of increasing the participation and the areas for that participation. The first superintendent thought that many principals were not ready for increased levels of participation. "Many of the schools that I have been associated with still have not come to terms with their own curriculum management processes." As such, they are not able to handle parents within the curriculum decision-making processes. Without "a principal that is very confident and very skilled, it will be counterproductive." This superintendent saw that premature parent participation could produce anxiety, defensiveness and the resultant production of a siege mentality for the staff. In schools that were not sufficiently advanced to desire parent participation a further danger existed--reduction of public confidence. Close parental scrutiny that naturally accompanies intense participation could, according to this superintendent, "also undermine parents' confidence, make them less secure with what the schools are doing." Participation meant that the participants "see the warts and all," and if the professional staff are not secure in what they are doing, then it was most unlikely to increase parents' faith in schooling.

A second superintendent saw a problem with the manner in which parental participation was introduced within the school community. Care must be taken to assure the school does not get "to the point where they accelerate the skill level of a certain group of parents who distance themselves from the others so they in turn become a formidable group to all other parents in the school." If this were to occur, it would become counterproductive to meaningful participation from other parents. It could produce tension between those participating and those who choose not to participate. Inherent within this was the feeling that one is not doing the "right thing" for one's child if one is not participating. The superintendent thought that this attitude could be very destructive. The same superintendent thought that moves for increased parental participation in school management was typical of the changes that had occurred within the South Australian Education Departments' schools in the last fifteen years. Parents had not been sufficiently educated as to the importance of the changes or that the changes were occurring. The superintendent said parents have

> accepted the changes in relation to their day-to-day living--just think of the kitchen and electrical appliances--but they question the changes in schooling. We haven't challenged them regarding their expectation that education remains basically the same as when they went to school. I think this is crucial, and I believe that it has been underplayed. I think that that is our fault and not their fault, and I think that the onus is on us, not them but us, to do something about it.

Increased parental participation was seen by this superintendent as crucial, but the system needed to think through the implications and not just put it in the principal's lap as a "fait accompli" and expect him/her to deal with it expeditiously. A major implication was the requirement for educating parents about participation. An assumption could not be made that the skills required were automatically available within the parent community. Conversely,

> a lot of the parents are starting to look at how schools function. They are more articulate themselves than their parents were 20 years ago. They know that the system is welcoming them in and they want more of a say than just on fund raising and how the canteen should run.

Failure to allow for this desire for an increased voice would build barriers that would be counterproductive to the movement from parental involvement to parental participation.

The third caution issued by a superintendent was that many of the premises used by individual schools and districts to make decisions would be challenged by parents. The superintendent gave an example of school amalgamations and school closures. In cases such as this parents were not so concerned as the district management with economic viability. The opinion frequently existed that the system had a large budget and must be able to find some way of solving the short-term problems. This superintendent said, "Parents are not prepared to accept some of our basic assumptions. We have a lot of parents who would say that we are making wrong decisions. I would imagine that that is the tip of the iceberg that we will uncover as we have more parental participation." The superintendent saw the challenge of assumptions as "healthy and another reason to keep up to date yourself but I think some principals will go under." However, he/she supported the move to increase parent participation. He/she thought that it would be a problem only while a movement along the continuum from involvement to participation occurred. With greater participation, increased appreciation of the difficulties and constraints would emerge. On the balance, the superintendent thought that more could be gained than lost by increasing the level of parental participation.

Despite these cautions, all of the superintendents interviewed supported the move to increase parental participation in school decision-making. They felt that participation strengthened the home/school teamwork concept, improved the ability to implement decisions, increased parental knowledge about the constraints under which schools operated and protected schools from the insular attitudes of the educational staff.

The aspect of home/school teamwork was a matter of common expectations, with both parents and staff seeing and acknowledging the needs of the other for the benefit of the children. One superintendent summarized this when saying, "If the home and the school and the community are at odds, the kids are then in the middle. The kids get mixed messages from each participant." The superintendent thought that groups needed to get together to talk about the issues. It would be active participation, "a partnership and not 'us' and 'them' stuff. I see it as a positive aspect of schooling." Though it would not be easy, superintendents all thought that the act of communicating on the issues involved improved understanding of those issues and improved the implementation of decisions made about those issues.

One superintendent stressed that increasing parental participation did not necessarily improve the quality of the decisions made but it was part of the democratic process. The superintendent thought that it was probably necessary for all superintendents and principals to have an appreciation of decision-making in a political environment. He/she maintained, however, that irrespective of the quality "what you get is a better ability to implement the decisions that you do get because people understand what they are all about, what the constraints are, what the encouragers are, and what the parents need to do as a result of the decision. That is one of the reasons for involving parents."

The concept of having parents work with each other was seen as important by several superintendents because of the nature of suburban community life in many locations. Urban areas have no real focus or identity. People work, play and frequently worship in different locations. The suburbs were the place where people had their residence, and they were commonly chosen because of their proximity to the location of other important aspects of people's lives. One superintendent thought that

> the parents need that exposure to each other, because individual parents typically think other parents are the same as them and therefore they can't understand why the school is not doing what they want. When they get immersed in a whole community of parents with quite diverse expectations, they begin to appreciate the position the school is in and the difficulty in maintaining that common sense of purpose and cohesiveness and yet allow sufficient provision for the diversity that is there. I don't believe that there is any way of communicating that to parents without them being part of the process.

If there was a need for parents to experience the diversity of opinion and values around them, then many superintendents saw the same need for the staff. Superintendents saw teachers as quite limited in job and life experiences and would benefit from wider exposure to parents and competing viewpoints. One superintendent thought that many teachers would argue against this, citing the fact that they were parents. However, he/she still thought that "you get a fuller picture when you have parental involvement. Some of us can argue that we are parents too, but we are not parents that see from a non-school view. We tend to be very insular."

Summary

Superintendents all supported the need for increased parental involvement in schooling. All were consistent in defining the difference between involvement and participation. Participation was seen as the opportunity to fully engage in the highest level of decision-making within the schools. Involvement was seen to be at the other end of the continuum and could be considered as the school's use of another pair of hands or parents doing voluntary work for the school.

Three superintendents offered cautions about increased parental participation in schools. They were cautions about the speed of the introduction of the participation, the possibility of creating an elite group of parents, and the possibility of parental rejection of premises used for decision-making by school personnel.

Despite these cautions superintendents thought that increased participation led to an increase in school/home teamwork, improved the ability of schools and their community to implement decisions, increased parental knowledge about the constraints under which schools operated and protected schools from the insular attitudes of the educational staff.

Academic Program Focus

Superintendents frequently mentioned the necessity for more attention to be given to the coordination and continuity of the instructional program. This was item 12 in the questionnaire, and the responses to this item were such that only 10.5% of schools received an extremely effective rating. This was the third-lowest response rate in this category for all items in all factors. One superintendent said that "schools frequently have an inability to coordinate a curriculum from one year level to another and across similar year levels, especially in the larger schools. Another superintendent summarized the feeling of many when saying that lack of coordination meant that one could not be sure that from the time a child "started in a school until the child left the school, irrespective of the year, that the child has had a program that has been balanced, been relevant, been cohesive, been sequential where appropriate, and been inclusive." Superintendents believed "that principals are in need of assistance in terms of development of strategies whereby that kind of integration and coordination could be achieved." The lack of coordination and continuity of curriculum offerings was of concern to superintendents because parents were frequently critical of situations where one child experienced camps and other out-of-school excursions which were denied to other members of the family in the same school. Superintendents indicated that if the curriculum was not coordinated within a school, then there was no hope of convincing parents that children changing schools did not suffer academic discrimination.

Assessing School Effectiveness

Item 58 of the questionnaire asked superintendents to nominate the best person or group of people to judge school effectiveness. Nine superintendents thought that a panel comprised of parents, staff, and an external person should be responsible for judging the effectiveness of a school. Within the nine, six thought that the external person should be the superintendent while three merely mentioned a person from the Education Department. Two superintendents thought that a superintendent was the best person to judge school effectiveness, while two others thought it should be the superintendent and district office staff. Three superintendents thought that a superintendent, principal, and an external principal or principals should be involved in the judgement. Two superintendents suggested a panel of staff and parents, while one thought that a group of parents with input from students was the way to judge school effectiveness.

Thirteen of the 19 responses indicated that a superintendent should be an integral part of the composition of the group making the judgement about the effectiveness of a school. This represented 68% of the superintendent respondent group.

Superintendent assessment of the global effectiveness of principals and schools is reported in Table 7.3:

Table 7.3

Superintendent Ratings of Global Principal Effectiveness and Global School Effectiveness
(n = 57)

Item		Effectiveness(%f)						Standard
#	Item	Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Deviation
57	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of the school	3.5	29.8	22.8	29.8	14.0	3.21	1.13
83	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of the principal	19.3	14.0	22.8	28.1	15.8	3.07	1.36

It must be remembered that superintendents were forced to choose non-effective schools, moderately effective schools and very effective schools as part of the questionnaire instructions. One can see, however, that 19.3% of the principals were considered non-effective yet only 3.5% of the schools were considered to be the same. In all other categories, there were similar percentages in both global school effectiveness and global principal effectiveness responses. The factors that superintendents are most likely to use to assess the global effectiveness of a principal is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

Predictors of Overall Principal Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to answer research question 12, "What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of superintendents' global ratings of principal effectiveness?" Stepwise multiple regression analysis of superintendent responses to the questionnaire produced the results reported in Table 7.4.

The only variable to contribute to the regression analysis was the factor *Principal as Nexus*. This factor contributed 84% of the variance in global principal effectiveness and had a Pearson correlation coefficient of .916 with the dependent variable.

Table 7.4

Predictors of Global Principal Effectiveness as Assessed by Superintendents (n = 57)

Predictor in order of entry to the Regression Analysis	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change	Simple R	Beta
Principal as Nexus	0.916	0.840	0.840	0.916	0.916

During interviews, superintendents were unanimous in stressing the importance of the performance of the principal on the items within the factor *Principal as Nexus*. They stressed four component activities within the factor. The first to be mentioned by each superintendent was the principal's ability to communicate. This was seen as crucial and meant an ability to relate to all persons with whom the/she came into contact. Most superintendents thought that this ability rested on the principal having a genuine concern for and liking of people.

The second aspect was the effectiveness of principals in modelling a concern for the ongoing learning of adults through their own actions. This was linked with the third facet, the principal's ability to evaluate staff, give feedback, and assist staff in planning for their own personal professional growth. This growth had two components. One was the general improvement of the school's performance, and the other was the individual teacher's need to capitalize on her/his personal strengths and to overcome weaknesses in the performance of her/his teaching activities.

The fourth facet to be mentioned by superintendents was the principal's sensitivity to the local community. Principals need to recognize the requirements of the community and give due consideration to it when planning for the achievement of school goals. Planning for the attainment of school goals should include parental participation. Superintendents thought that principals needed to be sensitive to the judgement made by people on the basis of their interactions with school personnel--the principal, staff members, and students--when they were not in the school. Many of the judgements made about the school by these people external to the school, were extrapolations from their interactions with school personnel or observations of personnel interacting with others.

Predictors of Overall School Effectiveness

The purpose of this section is to answer research question 13, "What school effectiveness factors are the best predictors of superintendents' global ratings of school effectiveness?" Stepwise multiple regression analysis of superintendent responses to the questionnaire produced the results reported in Table 7.5:

Table 7.5

Predictors of Global School Effectiveness as Assessed by Superintendents
(n = 57)

Predictor in order of entry to the Regression Analysis	Multiple R	R Square	R Square Change	Simple R	Beta
Parental Support	0.923	0.852	0.852	0.923	0.923
Principal as Nexus	0.942	0.886	0.035	0.918	0.453

The variable that contributed the most variance (85.2%) in the dependent variable was the factor *Parental Support* ; this variable had a Pearson correlation coefficient of .923 with the dependent variable overall school effectiveness. The second variable, *Principal as Nexus* , added a further 3.5% to the overall variance and had a correlation coefficient of .453 with overall school effectiveness.

During the interviews, superintendents stressed the critical nature of parental support for school effectiveness. Two components of this factor were mentioned by superintendents. The first was the need for the school to adequately explain and clarify the academic program to the parents, and the second was the need for increasing parental participation in the management of schools.

Failure to explain changes or course offerings sometimes led to "conflict about curriculum issues" and frequently prompted parents to approach the district office or to contact the Minister of Education. The concerns "usually centered around sex education courses, religious education courses, or sometimes political courses in our secondary schools." As well as the controversy surrounding these courses, parents queried superintendents about teaching methodology in the core curriculum areas, assessment and reporting procedures, and discipline strategies adopted by the schools.

All superintendents in the interviews indicated that they supported increasing the involvement level of parents in the schooling of their children. They suggested that where the school and community were willing, the involvement should be active participation in the decision-making processes for the management of the schools. However, cautions were issued about the rate of the increase of the participation.

The factor *Principal as Nexus* was the second variable to enter the regression and this reinforced the opinions given by superintendents during the interviews. All saw the action of the principal as critical to the generation of school effectiveness. Superintendents consistently commented on the strong, positive relationship between overall principal effectiveness and overall school effectiveness.

Relationship between Principal Effectiveness and School Effectiveness

This section answers research question 14, "What is the relationship between superintendents' global ratings of principal effectiveness and superintendents' global ratings of school effectiveness?" Table D.6, given in Appendix D, indicates that there was a highly positive correlation coefficient of .908 between the variable global principal effectiveness and global school effectiveness. All superintendents supported this during the interviews. The following three superintendents' comments summarize superintendents' statements. There is "a direct relationship, absolutely," it is "100% --if you are looking for an outstanding place," and the relationship when expressed as a "correlation coefficient, about 0.9."

Some superintendents thought that "in the short term a school could be effective without an effective principal." Such a school could in the words of one superintendent, "work around an ineffective principal but it is never outstanding--effective, yes." When a statement was made about an effective school with an ineffective principal it was always qualified. As one superintendent said,

> I have seen some schools that are reasonably effective without an effective principal, but it always seems to me that that is a rather tenuous situation and I would never be confident that it would continue and the school grow and develop without some sort of decline or deterioration.

There was a "degree of fragility in that type of situation," and all superintendents thought that an "effective principal could make an ineffective school more effective in a reasonably short time." However, the change from effective to extremely effective took much longer, "three to four years."

Summary

Superintendents offered opinions on all factors important to school effectiveness. An analysis of their responses to the questionnaire indicated that in most items more than 30% of responses fell in the "highly effective" or "extremely effective" categories. Given that they were requested to choose one non-effective school, one effective school, and one highly effective school, there seemed to be a high degree of satisfaction with most aspects of the operation of effective schools. The exceptions were improving the work of staff, setting school goals cooperatively with staff and parents, and coordination and continuity of the instructional program.

In the interviews, strong emphasis was given by superintendents to the importance of principal's effectiveness for the attainment of school effectiveness. Superintendents were most willing to talk about aspects of the principal's operation that were important to his/her effectiveness. The principal was the nexus, and through his/her activities impact was brought to bear upon facets that affected school effectiveness. Superintendents consistently mentioned a nucleus of prerequisite skills that principals needed in their repertoire if they were to be effective. These included good communication and interpersonal skills, an ability to articulate a vision for the school, and the ability to have people coalesce as a team to assist with the achievement of that vision. Fundamental to the acquisition of these skills was a secure self-concept and a genuine liking of other people.

Superintendents indicated that to further facilitate movement towards school goals, principals needed to have a personal professional development program, so modelling a commitment to ongoing learning for all the adults within the school. Effective supervisory processes were seen as a link between the maintenance of high expectations for all staff and the development of a personal professional program for all. Associated with individual professional development programs was the necessity for whole group learning to facilitate goal attainment. Professional, dedicated staff were seen to facilitate the attainment of effectiveness. Superintendents felt that the standard of teacher competence was consistently improving but persistent attention to teachers' ongoing professional development was still required. The biggest constraint on this was the provision of adequate time. Time, of course, costs money. One superintendent suggested partial use of vacation time for professional development activities but declared that the system would need to give more concrete credence to the importance of these activities before this would occur.

Superintendents thought school goals should be set with the assistance of parents, and this highlighted the superintendents sensitivity to school/parent/community concerns. Superintendents were consistent in thinking that all schools required effective review strategies and processes for assessing school effectiveness and that this information should be provided to the parent community. They thought that parent participation in school management decision-making should increase. All were careful to define the continuum of parent involvement through to parent participation in the highest level of decision-making. Three superintendents expressed cautions about parent participation. These cautions were on the rate of the introduction of the participation, the possibility of creating an elite group of parents, and the possibility of parental rejection of premises used for decision-making by school personnel.

All superintendents were sensitive to the necessity of schools reporting student progress adequately to both the students and the parents. No one format or process was seen as utopian but superintendents indicated that the connection between learning and assessing must always be the focus of any system. They favoured some form of written information being given to parents. Praise was given to the schools that used the telephone to report positive student attainments to parents. When interviews were held, superintendents thought that they should be long enough to encourage meaningful dialogue. This level of dialogue required skilled, sensitive teachers.

Student/teacher interaction was seen as a prime component of student satisfaction and happiness. The nature of this interaction must give recognition to the rights and needs of the students. Appreciation of student rights has escalated in the last ten years and teachers must accommodate this changed emphasis. Unresolved student-teacher conflicts frequently prompted parents to seek assistance from the district office.

Superintendents' responses in both the questionnaire and interviews indicated that effective and non-effective schools gave consistently adequate attention to the management of facilities. The internal environment of schools however, was frequently linked to school climate. The front foyer, the method of greeting by the office staff, the reception by the principal and staff, and the conditions in the hallways gave powerful messages to visitors and were indicators of the climate within the school. Superintendents thought that many people extrapolated from these impressions and their observations of staff and students in non-school settings to form judgements about the general effectiveness of schools.

CHAPTER 8

CONSTRAINTS TO THE ATTAINMENT OF MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS AND MAXIMUM SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

Parent, principal, and superintendent perceptions of the constraints inhibiting the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness and maximum school effectiveness are reported in this chapter in order to answer the following research questions, which in part guided the study:

Question 15. What factors are seen by parents to constrain the attainment of maximum effectiveness in schools?

Question 16. What factors are seen by principals to constrain the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness?

Question 17. What factors are seen by principals to constrain the attainment of maximum school effectiveness?

Question 18. What factors are seen by superintendents to constrain the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness?

Question 19. What factors are seen by superintendents to constrain the attainment of maximum school effectiveness?

Parent Perceptions

Item 59 in the questionnaire asked parents, "What three key factors currently stop the school your child/children attend from achieving maximum effectiveness?" In the responses, 44 different aspects that constrained the attainment of maximum effectiveness in schools were identified.

The most frequently mentioned topics were finance, parental participation, communication, professional staff, curriculum, and leadership. Each of these areas is elaborated in separate sections below. In addition to these six areas, nine parents identified the low, socio-economic area in which the school was located as an inhibitor and nine miscellaneous aspects were each mentioned by only one parent.

Finance

Lack of money was identified as a school effectiveness inhibitor by 50 respondents. Other inhibitors that relate directly to the lack of finance were mentioned. These included classes that were too large (43 responses); reduction in the number of teachers available at the beginning of the school year (40 responses); transportable classrooms or poor buildings (21 responses); lack of language, music, drama and physical education teachers (17 responses); lack of support staff (11 responses); and non-repair of vandalism (9 responses).

During the interviews parents were asked what factors most inhibited the effectiveness of a school. Lack of money was often mentioned. The responses of these parents are indicative of their concern about financial matters.

> Money is one big thing--enough to buy support material, enough for additional teachers for specific needs, like coordination programs. It just keeps going. Money, money, yes, money obviously.
>
> Well, I suppose more money, lots of it (laughter). We have a very active parent body which does a lot of fund raising, but we don't get any help from the government which is a bit of a bummer.
>
> Money would help with things like excursions; they are so expensive. These could be subsidized in a way because a lot of parents can't afford them, but the kids learn so much by going out.

When the lack of money was mentioned, most parents seemed to think that it was not something that was easy to change or necessary to change in the short term. Competition for dollars within the government budget was seen to be intense. Many mentioned that more money for schools would be nice; but given that little additional money was available, there were other aspects that could increase school effectiveness. The following is indicative of those aspects mentioned:

> Almost all of the problems could be overcome with sufficient dollars. Obviously this is not a realistic proposition. So I could come back to the principal. He/she is very important to the effectiveness of the school: directing the school, motivating teachers

> and students, getting parents involved, establishing and maintaining communication between staff/parents/students.

Parental Participation

The next most frequently mentioned area was parental participation (35 responses). All parents were of the opinion that more participation by parents would increase the effectiveness of the school, but four parents stated that parental input was not valued. Three parents suggested that there should be more liaison between the school and the wider community. Four parents noted that schools received very little positive publicity.

Parent interview responses were consistent with the information gained from the questionnaire. More participation was seen to be necessary to assist the school reflect community needs and aspirations:

> I think that it [parental participation] is quite important. . . . I think that a school should reflect community needs and attitudes and the best way for this to happen is with parental involvement in the decision-making within the school. Parent bodies play a large part in school improvement. If they are active, the school has an ear to the wishes of the parents and the larger community and so can hear the needs being expressed.

Another parent was of the view that if schools were to improve, then "I just think that they make sure that they should keep parents involved as much as is possible in a school." This was reiterated when another parent said that for school improvement one needed "more parent involvement to let the principal know exactly what parents are feeling and what they want in the school. For the parents to be able to say this is what they really want." Another parent saw the value of channelling community expectations to the staff but recognized the critical importance of principal and staff attitudes towards this involvement. The parent suggested that "a good school will have a good parent body behind it, because the people who are very involved are concerned for the welfare of the school as a whole." If the input was perceived to be valued, then it had a positive effect on the level of involvement and generated greater participation. The value given to parent participation was seen to be dependent upon the level of communication between parents and staff and to reflect the level of communication.

Communication

Communication difficulties were mentioned by 29 parents as inhibitory to school effectiveness when they responded to item 59 in the questionnaire. Included in this aspect were poor communications between (a) principal and staff (15 responses), (b) between principal and parents (9 responses), (c) between teacher and parents (18 responses), and (d) between teacher and students (11 responses). Communication between staff members was a factor required for school improvement in the opinion of a parent who said "Open and honest communication between the staff and the principal and between the staff and the deputy principal is really important. It helps to make the school effective. If they can discuss problems together and work on them as a team, the effectiveness of the school will improve." Parents saw the principal as the essential, central hub of the communication network. One recommended that,

> for improvement you probably need to look at the communication skills and the whole idea of how the principal gets across his ideas--how he takes in ideas from the community around him, interprets them, and puts them into school planning. It is mostly how he communicates with the teachers, the public, the students, the whole works. To me it is very important that those communication skills are outstanding.

If principals are to enhance their communication skills and lead a school team more effectively, then it is crucial that they really like people. One parent said,

> You must make sure that the principals like people. They should have lots and lots of social and communication skills. It should be made sure that they have these skills to be able to communicate with the parents, staff and students before they become principals. Otherwise they can't do their job very well. They should be able to lead the school team.

Communication ability was seen as an essential skill that was required to develop teamwork. Parents saw the team as including staff, parents, and students, so the principal needed good communication ability with all groups if the team was to develop. One parent reinforced this when saying,

> It gets back to communication and the communication with students as well as parents and each other as a staff. Communication solves a lot of things, however, working together as a team, so the left hand knows what the right is doing, so that things can

> work in together is really important.' If this occurred then I think each school would be a lot more successful, and so would the education system.

Conflict between a child and teacher frequently initiated parental contact with the school. This is discussed under parent interventions in Chapter 10. One parent advocated that a change in teacher attitude was necessary if this aspect of parental concern was to diminish. Honest communication with an acknowledgement of the rights of both parties was necessary. Failure to attend to the resultant problems would lead to a great amount of discontent and bad publicity for the school. Parents were quick to talk to other parents whenever they perceived mistreatment of their child. Though some parents believe that their child can do no wrong, nonetheless when parents contacted the school they felt that staff frequently gave the impression that the student was always the one at fault. One parent summarized these opinions:

> Teachers will not admit to a personality clash with a student. The student is always wrong, never the teacher. All that creates is war, teacher against student, student against teacher, parent against student because the kid is savage when he comes home. So the parent goes over to the school and is soon fighting the teacher, the teacher takes it out on the kid, and so it goes around and around.

Non-resolution of this type of problem leads to an unhappy child with discontented parents having little communication with the teacher. If the problem persists, the parents frequently contact the principal or the superintendent seeking assistance in resolving the conflict. Even if the problem is then resolved, there is typically some scar tissue that continues to affect the school/home communication link.

Several parents were concerned about communication from school to home. Contact with the home was usually initiated by a teacher or the principal when there was a problem with some aspect of the child's performance or behavior. For a general improvement to occur in the relationships between the parents and the school, a change in these communications was needed. However, the current communication patterns and foci for those communications was really one of the mores of the teaching culture that parents felt should be changed. This was summarized by one parent who said, "Teachers don't usually send a note home for parents when there is something good to tell them. I would love to see teachers encouraged to bring out the positive sides in their contacts with the home."

Professional Staff

Aspects associated with the staff of a school that parents thought inhibited the attainment of maximum effectiveness included the poor teaching skills of some teachers (14 parents); poor staff morale (8 parents); lack of incentive for teachers (6 parents); lack of an effective teacher review system (8 parents); lack of change by teachers (7 parents); and the need for more male junior primary teachers (9 parents). In addition to these factors, five parents mentioned that teachers gave very little encouragement or attention to the "bright" students. Teachers with poor disciplinary techniques were cited by 18 parents as an inhibiting factor for school effectiveness, while teacher absences and long service entitlements, with the resultant lack of teacher continuity were mentioned by 12 parents.

Many parents mentioned good discipline but were unable to define it other than meaning order in the school with some rules. However, as one parent said, "The rules should be such that the kids know and understand them. That is as important as the rules being fair." One parent had a concept of what was required in school discipline and expressed it when proposing improvement in schools:

> If you want to see if a school is effective, then you could look at the teachers attitude towards discipline, their attitude towards the classroom management.
>
> Interviewer What do you mean by discipline?
>
> I really like the approach where the children are encouraged to develop their own sense of responsibility to discipline themselves and understand reasons for the actions and the consequences.

One parent was of the opinion that the standards of discipline had declined with the abolition of corporal punishment. This has caused a resultant loss of authority for the staff. The parent thought that actions taken by staff when disciplining children were now open to challenge by parents who were becoming more sensitive to the rights of their children.

This had caused a decline in the standards of student behavior within schools. This parent said,

> I don't think that the old standards were so wrong and the abolition of them is bad. The children that cause the trouble know that their parents will come up if action is taken against them. I don't agree with that. I believe that in certain areas parents should at least know why the decisions are being made, but at the same time they shouldn't have overall authority in other areas.

Along with discipline, the issue of continuity of the educational program for children received comment. Parents were concerned about the leave entitlements of teachers and the resultant number of contract teachers in the system. One parent who spoke very forcefully said:

> The thing that has frustrated me most with my children throughout their education, is them being treated like a mob of sheep. One child, for two years in a row, had three different teachers for each year because of teacher long service leave provisions. . . . After it happened the first year, the same class shouldn't have been put in the same position the following year. There was no way the child could settle down and get on with learning when he had to keep getting used to being handled in different ways.

This particular parent was most critical of the principal, because it was known "that this particular class had been through this disruptive problem" and so administrative steps should have been taken to alleviate the disruptions. Another parent, when speaking about teacher leave, indicated that "there should be more permanent teachers and less of this contract situation, because it is very important for the children to get to know all of the teachers in the school."

One parent said that as well as students keeping the same teacher throughout the school year it was necessary to regularly evaluate all teachers. "I think that teacher performances should be monitored to keep an even quality of teachers throughout the school." When parents mentioned the necessity for teacher evaluation, it was usually based on a personal concern to ensure that their children were getting the best teachers possible. Parents wanted teachers who remained professionally knowledgeable, up-to-date and committed to teaching, and who achieved the best possible results with the children in their care. Many parents were aware of the ongoing evaluation and reporting procedures for contract teachers but could not make any statements about the monitoring of the performance of permanent teachers. They were emphatic that it was necessary, but strategies for the required evaluation were not offered beyond the necessity for external persons to be involved in the process. One parent said:

> I don't know how the evaluation of teachers happens, but to me it seems that if you have got a position as teacher you are right. Yet the poor contract teachers seem to be evaluated a lot more and my experience tells me that a lot of the contract teachers are far more confident and competent than some who have been in the system a long time. I think the teaching profession has to grapple with that problem.

Nonetheless, parents were generally supportive of staff and quick to acknowledge the efforts of those seen to be dedicated principals and teachers. The positive effect these teachers had on the lives of their children were made known. Parents frequently mentioned the happiness of their children and the increased level of attainment for the children generated by the efforts of these teachers.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered within the schools was seen to constrain the attainment of effectiveness and changes were considered necessary by 30 parents. Within the 30 responses, the following changes were recommended: more emphasis on the "3R's" (4 parents); more sport and extracurricula activities (6 parents); greater utilization of technology (8 parents); better transition programs (4 parents); and support for and against sex education, religious education, consumer education, and the teaching of languages other than English.

Several parents were of the opinion that the Education Department should be more stringent in the guidelines defining the areas of the curriculum that were to be taught. These parents wanted a narrower focus of educational offerings. They were of the opinion that local communities should not have a say in curriculum content or areas to be included within the curriculum. Frequently associated with this view was the opinion that school uniforms for the students would assist in raising the standards of education. One opinion summarized these view points:

> Well, I don't think that the system sets down strong enough guidelines as to what the school should be doing. A suggestion I could make would be a concentration on the 3R's as I referred to before and the discipline in the school. That can extend right down to school uniforms.

In other comments about inclusions or deletions of curriculum content, no pattern or consensus of replies was discernible.

Leadership

The poor quality of leadership in schools was considered an issue by 14 parents while 13 other parents mentioned that their school had no central purpose, vision, or goal. The "red tape" of the Education Department was cited by 8 parents as a negative factor, and 6 parents stated that the Education Department did not provide sufficient backup to schools. One parent mentioned item 59--factors which inhibit the attainment of maximum school effectiveness--during the final interview comments and said

> superintendents should play a more active role, although our principal is concerned about them getting too involved, in checking the nature of the teaching and the curriculum being covered. . . . The superintendent doesn't know what occurs with the staff or school other than what he is told by the principal.

Many parents wanted a person external to the school involved in evaluating the school, the nature of the leadership provided, and the quality of the instruction within the school. Some parents cited the superintendent as the appropriate person. This was discussed in Chapter 5.

Remuneration of the principal was considered by one person to be the key to improvement in the school system:

> I would like to see them paid more, and if that happens then they have got to become more accountable. However, opportunity should be there for them to go back into the teaching staff if they want to or perhaps into administrative staff somewhere else. . . . They are probably the show pieces of the education system. They have a demanding job for which the salary is not high enough.

A review of the management structure of schools to reflect today's operational style was postulated by several parents. These people indicated that principals should not have tenure in the position and options should be available for those who wished to change career paths. They indicated that making the options available would open the promotion ladder, would enhance job satisfaction for many teachers, and would improve the effectiveness of the school system. One parent said, "The management structure right from the top to the bottom leaves a lot to be desired. It needs a new system sorted out so that teachers can be more involved and progress up the ladder." This links with the expression of teacher job satisfaction mentioned earlier in Chapter 5. Many parents thought that teachers should be utilized in the management of the school and that they should use their expertise outside of their classroom. Not to do so was considered a waste of talent.

Summary

Parent perceptions of factors that inhibited the attainment of maximum school effectiveness could be categorized under six headings: finance, parental participation, communication, professional staff, curriculum and leadership.

Most parents saw that additional finances could solve many problems, and others saw that the provision of additional money was not possible. Concern, however, was expressed about staffing levels and in particular about the lack of specialist teachers and the short supply of support services for teachers. The quality of buildings, maintenance, and undertaking of urgent minor repairs to buildings received critical comment. In acknowledging that the injection of large amounts of money into the system was unlikely, parents then offered alternate strategies for the improvement of schools. One aspect frequently mentioned was the level of parental participation.

Lack of participation was seen to be a negative influence, and parents were unanimous that more parental participation was necessary. However it was seen that the level of participation and the level of genuine communication between the parties was dependent upon positive principal and staff attitudes. Two-way channels of communication between the principal, staff, students and parents were all seen as essential. A break in any link was seen as an inhibitory factor for the attainment of school effectiveness.

The hub of these networks was the principal and his/her level of interpersonal skills was crucial. Principals really liking people was seen to underpin their level of genuine interpersonal skills. Several parents commented upon the power relationship between teachers and students and the deleterious effect of teachers not being honest and admitting their deficiencies in some of these exchanges.

Parents were concerned about teacher quality and expressed a desire for their children to have the most competent, professionally current, committed teachers. The processes of teacher evaluation and quality control were questioned. Short-term contract teachers were believed to be more accountable than tenured staff. This aspect, along with the lack of continuity of experience for students because of the leave provisions for teachers, were seen as problems that "the teaching profession has to grapple with."

Curriculum changes were considered necessary by 30 parents (16% of the respondents to the questionnaire). Included in these curriculum responses were more emphasis on the "3R's" (4 parents); more sport and extracurricula activities (6 parents); greater utilization of technology (8 parents); inadequate transition programs (5 parents); and support for and against sex education, religious education, consumer education and the teaching of languages other than English. No evidence of consensus was evident in the responses.

The principal was seen as the nexus of the communication channels within the school community and as such was vital to increasing the effectiveness of the school. Some parents questioned the current management structure of schools and suggested that a review was necessary. Parents commented on the need for a dynamic principal with a vision of what the school could achieve and with the communication abilities to effectively share that vision with all constituents. There were consistent comments about the positive relationship between the abilities of the principal and the effectiveness of the school.

Principal Perceptions

Two questions were included in the questionnaire to seek information about the constraints on schools and principals preventing them from attaining maximum effectiveness. These issues were also pursued in the interviews with the sample of thirteen principals. In the interviews, principals were asked:

(1) What is the one factor that most inhibits the effectiveness of an R-7 principal?

(2) What factor most inhibits the attainment of effectiveness in an R-7 school?

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data gained is presented below.

Constraints to the Attainment of Principal Effectiveness

Constraints preventing principals from the attainment of maximum effectiveness (item 87 in the questionnaire) and mentioned by principals, could be categorized as follows: facets within the principal's role (49), lack of time (44), staff (44), Education Department (34), facilities (19), parents (14), and student conflict and the lack of an effective behavior management program (1).

Within the first category, factors associated with the principal's role, there were references to lack of effective communication skills (9 principals), the difficulty of establishing consistent expectations (10 principals), the lack of clear goals (4 principals), being too accessible (4 principals), excessive paper work (9 principals), and lack of management skills (16 principals).

The group of principals who mentioned accessibility, paper work, and management skills could be linked with the 44 principals who saw that lack of time was a major constraint. Effective time management skills require the identification of major goals and the utilization of strategies to handle the myriad tasks associated with leadership. Effective time management processes can also ensure that an appropriate amount of organizational energy is addressed to the attainment of the major goals.

Within the staff category of responses, maintenance of high staff morale was of concern to 13 principals. Associated with this was the fact that five principals mentioned the changed staffing formulae and the negative impact being caused by the potential of increased numbers of teacher displacements. This would increase the mobility of staff and decrease morale because of uncertainty about placement options. The difficulty of producing change within a school because of the lack of staff mobility and long-term tenure was cited by seven principals. Non-effective teacher/principal relationship was cited by 10 principals, and the inability to select staff for a school was mentioned by six. Ineffective staff (2 principals) and inadequate staff release time were the only other aspects mentioned.

Inadequate leadership by the Education Department was of concern to 34 principals; the Education Department's unrealistic expectations about the rate at which schools could change received 13 responses. Three principals thought that the lack of Education Department policies was a major factor in their non-attainment of school effectiveness.

In the facilities category, principals mentioned the lack of specific facilities (12), inappropriate maintenance (1), problems with new buildings (1), and schools that were too small (5) as constraining factors. In the final category parents, parental apathy was reported by two principals, poor relationships with parents were declared by six principals, unrealistic parent expectations as to what the school could achieve and be responsible for were divulged by five principals, and the conflict between parent expectations and staff expectations about change was of concern for one principal.

During the interviews, principals were asked to identify the one factor that most inhibited the effectiveness of a principal. All but one focussed on aspects of the principal's role. The principal who was the exception saw that the structure of schooling was an inhibitor.

> I think the thing that inhibits the principal is the same thing that inhibits the whole system. That is something that is never described in documents. We have a model of schooling, an inherited model of schooling that is never spelt out anywhere. This model assumes that schools will have rooms with one teacher standing in front of the kids--that the teacher will talk to the children who will then write things down. We

> have a 19th century Dickensian model of schooling which has never changed, and it inhibits the effectiveness of school because it continues to make schools isolated from the community.

All other principals commented about aspects associated with the performance of tasks within the principal's role. Three principals were concerned about the very nature of the role--its breadth and fragmentation caused by the countless number of small, intermittent tasks requiring the principal's attention for brief periods of time. One principal, while acknowledging the scope of the role, was worried because

> I think that the job is so much bigger than the person that there is no one who can fill all of the parts. I don't think that there has ever been a principal that I have known who could do it all. It worries me that the principal as a person will be judged by the school's perfection. . . . We all fall short. It is important that we recognize that we can't do it all and that those who supervise us can understand this as well.

This person's comments, while not in contrast to many others who saw an inescapable link between school effectiveness and principal effectiveness, serves to remind evaluators of the danger of associating personal attributes with aspects of performance. Principals saw that there was an intertwining of some personal skills with functions performed, but a person's ability to carry out the task they felt should be the priority focus of an evaluation. Reinforcing their concern with the breadth of the role and its multitudinous demands, one principal said:

> The one factor that inhibits is the multitudinous demands that the principal has to confront. I suppose any person reading in the area of principalship would know that the principal's job is compounded by hundreds of thirty-second to two-or-three minute tasks. That is an ongoing daily occurrence. Time blocking and priority setting are essential tasks to be undertaken by the principal to improve effectiveness. It is the ability to really hone in, prioritizing and recognizing the chances of greatest opportunity, that a principal has to learn to do to become truly effective.

Another principal, while acknowledging the multitudinous demands of the role, saw it was essential to develop strategies

> to cut through that sort of thing and have time to sit down and reflect on the overall picture. But once again it is the small things: if you can't demonstrate that you can do these well, then people aren't going to trust you with the big ones. However, there are some principals who get so bogged down with the little things that they never get to the big issues. They are never able to stand back from the activity or feel guilty about closing their door for two hours to spend the time just thinking of the different things that need doing. What inhibits principals most is the nature of the job with lots of little

> interruptions, but the other major factor is principals not taking the lead to do something about that.

The inability of principals to stand back from the continuous action within their school and analyze the school's performance was a concern. This concern was addressed by the following principal who indicated,

> Unless principals develop the skill to be able to reflect on what is happening in their school, and reflect in a very clinical way to see what is good and what is bad, then they easily become moribund. The school ceases to work on the critical and vital issues; teachers become complacent; the parents accept the performance as the norm. This can become a downward spiral until some thing major happens to break the cycle.

Reflective practice was seen to require a commitment of time; the effective use of time was mentioned by two principals in the interviews and 44 principals in their questionnaires as an operational constraint on the attainment of maximum effectiveness. One principal said,

> I reckon it is time. Time to be able to do the things that I have talked about. To be able to consult, to talk, to involve others. You have to put time aside to listen to individual people on the staff and at the same time be able to live up to what they want, given all of the other paper work and professional development requirements. Time management.

The ability to build and maintain relationships received considerable attention earlier in this chapter. Once again it was mentioned by three principals and it was indicated that the lack of team building skills and communication skills constrained the coalescing of people and their activities towards the achievement of the school's vision. Though the leadership skills of the principal were important, the quality of the people within the school could have a positive or negative effect on the achievement of the vision. One principal said, "The human resources inhibit but they also are the greatest advantage. . . . So let's say human resources, and how effectively the leader makes use of them or not." Irrespective of the quality of the people working within the organization, one principal thought that the "lack of the principal's personal willingness to shoulder the responsibility for the actions of the total organization while at the same time giving credit to the people who make the collective actions of the organization positive" prevented principals from attaining maximum effectiveness.

Summary

Responses to question 87, the constraints preventing principals from the attainment of maximum effectiveness, could be categorized as follows: facets within the principal's role were mentioned by 49 principals; lack of time was mentioned by 44 principals; aspects associated with staff were mentioned by 44 principals; constraints caused by the Education Department were mentioned by 34 principals; the restrictive nature of some components of facilities was mentioned by 19 principals; parents were mentioned by 14 principals; and one principal mentioned student conflict and the lack of an effective behavior management program as a constraining factor.

Principals saw that it was necessary to develop time management strategies to not only deal with the breadth and fragmentation of the principal's role but to provide sufficient time to focus on the attainment of the overall school focus. Lack of reflective practice in this area could lead to a downward spiral in the school's performance.

Central to the attainment of school goals were two factors; the ability of the principal to communicate with all involved and his/her ability to engender a strong team orientation to goal achievement. Principals who were effective saw this need and personally shouldered the responsibility.

Constraints to the Attainment of School Effectiveness

Questionnaire responses by principals were categorized and 55 responses cited finance; 59 mentioned various aspects associated with staff; 27 mentioned demands placed upon the principal; 16 commented about factors under the control of the Education Department; 13 saw the need for more parental participation; 12 saw time constraints as a factor; 8 mentioned students; and 24 cited various miscellaneous factors.

The 55 responses in the first category, lack of finance, could be further subdivided. Inadequate buildings and repairs not being done were mentioned by 28 principals, insufficient money for professional development programs was of concern for 12 principals, and insufficient money for a range of support staff was mentioned by 15 principals.

Within the staff category, 15 principals suggested that the revised staffing formulae (produced in 1988 for the 1989 school year) would result in a decrease in the appointment of specialist teachers. This would have a negative effect on curriculum offerings for the students, hence reducing the effectiveness of the schools. Four principals were of the opinion that staffing levels were being determined by budget needs when they should be determined by student needs. Associated with the changed approach to staffing schools was the increased job uncertainty for contract teachers and the low morale being produced by the teacher displacement exercise beginning within the school system at the time the questionnaire was completed. Two principals saw that low morale was associated with the erosion of the status of teachers and the lack of adequate remuneration.

Several principals mentioned the low commitment of their staffs as a constraint, while staff commuting long distances was cited by three others. The travel requirements of these staff tended to inhibit their involvement with parents and was detrimental to school effectiveness. Various problems associated with staff development were mentioned by 21 principals. These included insufficient funds and incentives for ongoing teacher education, teachers not prepared to accept the necessity for ongoing change, long term staff stability reducing the input of new ideas and a contrary point of view, insufficient staff stability to mount an ongoing school development program.

Nine principals were concerned about their own and their colleagues' lack of professional knowledge, and six principals were concerned that the lack of cohesive school plans and goals were constraining the effectiveness of their schools. Four principals faced a dilemma produced by value conflict. The school was promoting cooperation/negotiation strategies for conflict resolution, whereas parents perceived that discipline should be imposed by the teachers, the authority figures, and hence staff should tell the children what was required. Support for new ideas and the implementation of those ideas was of concern to five principals, while three saw difficulties within their school because of the lack of policy development in many curriculum areas. Heavy administrative demands interfering with curriculum work was of concern to seven principals, while personal inexperience and lack of flexibility for the utilization of staff were of concern to individual principals.

Lack of support for schools and increasing incidences of conflict between schools and the Education Department were of concern to five principals. Associated with the lack of support from the Education Department, 11 principals collectively mentioned poor decision-making processes, administrators out of touch with problems being faced by schools, poor system direction and lack of clarity about immediate goals, and the increasing influence of politicians.

Parental participation was of concern to 13 principals and cited as a constraint on their attainment of maximum school effectiveness. Facets cited were a lack of communication with the wider community on expectations of schools, itinerant population and their resultant non involvement with the school, parent criticism of teachers, parent apathy to school activities, community resistance to change, and lack of parental knowledge for meaningful involvement.

When mentioning time constraints, principals were concerned about their own level of time management skills (4), lack of professional development time (4), time to evaluate the attainment or non attainment of goals (2), and the time needed to produce change within a school (2). Under the category of students, eight principals focussed attention on the poverty of many students, large class sizes, student attitude and the difficulty in satisfying their needs, and their school's lack of an effective student behavior management program.

The miscellaneous category contained single references to part-time teachers and their poor understanding of the total school; to the rapidity of curriculum change; to the lack of a decision-making policy; to non focussed, negative, uninformed public opinion; to a crowded curriculum; to school size and the insularity of small schools; to school location; to rapid growth; and to the policy of integrating students who have severe learning disabilities. The limitations of building design were mentioned by four principals, eight mentioned insufficient teacher preparation time, and two mentioned communication problems with part-time staff.

The data gained in the interviews reflected the above but gave added depth to the areas of concern for thirteen principals. There was a greater tendency to acknowledge the lack of ability of the principal as a critical constraining factor. The other areas of focus during the interviews were staff ability, leadership competency, vision, and parent participation.

Leadership competency and factors that affect that competency were seen as the major constraint by four principals. One principal indicated that a major skill factor required by principals within the set of leadership competencies was the ability to build and maintain relationships and to be successful in leading a team through the necessary change processes. Another saw the expectations people have about schooling as being detrimental to change. People's inability to cope with change was seen by the principal as a factor inherent within the structure of schooling. Antiquated community expectations were accepted without challenge and hence tradition mitigated against change. This principal indicated that,

> There is the set of leadership competencies. This means not only having new ideas but having the skills and processes and the strength of character and so on to bring about the changes. There is also people's traditional expectations of schooling which is generally about 20 years behind what is going on. Tradition is a tremendous, very powerful gyroscope keeping the system on the same track that it has always been on.

Irrespective of community attitudes to change and the structure of schooling, the principal was seen by principals to be central to what occurred within the school. In the words of one principal, as a constraint

> you could say finance, you could say staffing, maybe you could say the age group of the staff, but they all vary. The one thing that doesn't and is always part of the culture is the principal and his or her actions. It is how he or she leads the team. If there is no commitment to the place, things will fall apart.

Another principal saw that relationships were important but indicated that without a nucleus of people on the staff "who were born to be teachers" it was difficult to have an outstanding school. "If you have a staff without the collective 'it' I referred to earlier, then the school will not be effective. You will get a mediocre school, not an outstanding one. So it is the abilities of the staff and the relationships between them" that constrain the attainment of school effectiveness.

Parent participation was seen as a constraint by two principals. One saw the innate conservatism of the parents as a constraint, while the other thought that if the parent community lacked cohesiveness then it could create problems for the school. Sometimes the school could become an internecine battlefield. The latter principal said there

> can be blocks from an influential group of parents, as we found with our outdoor education policy. . . . It will leave some scar tissue. Those parents were a vocal, cohesive, militant, minority group against all others, but they had their way. I suppose it is the politics of fringe groups in action that we are increasingly seeing in our society.

However, one principal thought that for a beneficial increase in parental participation there needed to be a demystification of schooling:

> There are lots of things that parents don't understand and so are frightened to become involved in the place. It may be largely through the attitude of teachers. Within the teacher ranks there is a level of distrust, a fear that parents might be making judgements about their performance when they are in the room, so they subtly don't encourage involvement; they keep it mysterious.

Four principals were vigorous in indicating that a common focus or vision for a school was essential. Failing to generate one was a major constraint because even with staff development activities in place, the energy level would eventually diminish. One principal's comments summarized the concerns of the four:

> I think two things (a) lack of vision by the principal about where the school ought to be heading, what the school ought to be really doing for its children and its parents and its teachers, and (b) lack of vision coupled with an inability to help teachers learn, puts the school behind the eight ball. So the things that inhibit school effectiveness are no vision, not knowing where we are going and being lost. If a staff doesn't know where they are going but have an ability to train themselves, they have got a chance. Otherwise they are wobbling all over the place or just treading water. One can't tread water forever; one eventually drowns.

School goals or a school vision were consistently mentioned as necessary for school effectiveness; the inability of a principal to facilitate the production of a central purpose was a constraint on the attainment of effectiveness. The vision had to be achieved by team work, and the responsibility for generating the team approach rested with the principal.

Summary

Questionnaire responses by principals to the constraints on attaining maximum school effectiveness focussed on staff (59 responses), finance (55 responses), demands placed on the principal (27 responses), the Education Department and its actions (16 responses), lack of parental participation (13 responses), insufficient time (12 responses), students (8 responses), and various miscellaneous factors (24 responses).

During the interviews, principals tended to focus more on their own ability or lack of ability than on matters extraneous to themselves. They saw that there was a "set of leadership competencies" required for effectiveness. Two major facets within this set were the ability of the principal to successfully build relationships and the ability of the principal to generate a vision for the school that was common for all members of the team. The lack of agreement about a central vision for the school was detrimental to achieving school effectiveness because split foci diminished the energy level of individual staff and inhibited their personal learning.

Superintendent Perceptions

The chapter concludes with superintendent perceptions of the aspects of practice that inhibited the maximum attainment of principal effectiveness and school effectiveness. The purpose of this section is to provide information to answer the following research questions:

Question 18. What factors are seen by superintendents to constrain the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness?

Question 19. What factors are seen by superintendents to constrain the attainment of maximum school effectiveness?

Two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire for superintendents. They were asked to identify the factors that inhibited the attainment of maximum effectiveness for each principal and each school in their sample of three. These same issues were pursued during the interviews with the eight superintendents; the information gained is presented below.

Constraints to the Attainment of Principal Effectiveness

The responses to item 87 of the questionnaire, "What three key factors currently stop each principal from attaining maximum effectiveness?"were analyzed according to the overall principal effectiveness rating given by superintendents in item 83 of the questionnaire. If a principal was given an overall non-effective rating (1), slightly effective rating (2) or a moderately effective rating (3), then the responses to item 83 were put into a category designated "less effective principals." If the rating in response to item 83 was highly effective (4) or extremely effective (5), then they were placed into the second category of "more effective principals."

In the "less effective principal" category, poor interpersonal and communication skills were mentioned by 17 superintendents as inhibitors to the attainment of maximum effectiveness. Associated with lack of interpersonal skills was an inability of the principal to confront non-performing staff. Three superintendents thought that the principal was not able to relate to the teachers as professionals. Fifteen superintendents cited lack of a vision or the inability of the less effective principals to articulate goals for the school as a major inhibiting factor. Eight thought that the principal was a non-learner without a personal professional development program, while the poor management skills of the principal were cited by seven superintendents. Less effective principals not being prepared to question the level of attainment of the school or themselves was of concern to five superintendents. They thought poor evaluation procedures were inhibitors for five principals and three principals were insensitive to the local community. Five superintendents thought that the less effective principals were too involved with administration to the detriment of other important activities. The principal's narrow viewpoint was mentioned by five superintendents as was the laziness of the principal. Other facets mentioned by superintendents when indicating constraints on the attainment of school effectiveness for the less effective principals were a lack of personal credibility, lack of planning skills, promotion beyond competence level, inappropriate use of positional power, cynicism about the future, and awaiting retirement.

For the 32 principals who were in the more effective category, the major inhibitors were usually expressed as a need to improve in some aspect of their operation rather than a lack. There was one exception to this. Five superintendents thought that the lack of balance between the time given to personal non-working aspects of the principal's life and the time given to the job were inhibitors to the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness.. During interviews, superintendents expressed concern about the mental health of principals and a perception of their needing to lead balanced lives.

Fifteen superintendents thought that the system was at fault for not supporting the more effective principals. Of these, seven thought that inflexibility in the staffing processes was a factor in that lack of support while five thought that there were too many district demands on the principal's time for such things as committees. One superintendent saw that not enough flexibility existed with resource allocation for the principals to fund excellent programs, one mentioned poor facilities, and another mentioned the lack of clear direction from the system as an inhibitor for the principal. An improvement in time management skills was seen as a requirement for four principals. Three principals needed to improve their ability to monitor change processes, and another three principals required improvement in their administration skills. Clarifying priorities to reduce the load was a requirement of two of the more effective principals. Two superintendents thought that the principal suffered from self-doubt, four superintendents thought principals had too high an expectation of staff, while the inexperience of one extremely effective principal was an inhibitor to gaining further personal effectiveness.

The eight superintendents interviewed mentioned four major facets that inhibited the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness. The first facet in the words of one superintendent was the "lack of leadership and support from people like superintendents, lack of acknowledgement of both their [principals'] strengths and difficulties." A second facet in the words of another superintendent was "the lack of interpersonal skills of the principal," while the third facet mentioned by superintendents was the principal's lack of personal security. According to one superintendent, this frequently led to the principal "wanting to control everything, wanting to know all the decisions from each group." The fourth facet mentioned by superintendents and stated by one was "the way that a principal thinks, closed or open." A closed mind was seen to increase the possibility of principal insensitivity to staff, student, and community needs.

A superintendent when talking about the lack of leadership for principals, indicated that the lack of system support

> enhances their feeling of isolation from people, a sort of a diminution of confidence that comes from being isolated. There are very few people that can be genuinely and deeply and intelligently interested in the principal's work. Principals have got other principals, but they have their own schools and their own contexts on their minds. They don't know your context like you know it yourself, so it is the superintendent's responsibility to support principals.

One superintendent said, "A superintendent is the only person that a principal can expect that kind of attention from. The trouble is that superintendents progressively have been unable to do that." Superintendents saw that the reorganization of the functions of the superintendency within the South Australian Education Department which would allow them to spend more time with principals in their schools was a positive step towards increasing school effectiveness.

The level of interpersonal skills of principals was once again seen as crucial, and deficiencies in this area an inhibited to the attainment of maximum effectiveness.

Superintendents thought, as one said, "a practice or skill can be learnt by anyone, but this takes an extremely long time in this interpersonal area." However, interpersonal skills in isolation were not the key to effectiveness. The interpersonal skills were seen by superintendents as necessary prerequisites for effective use of higher-level skills. One superintendent indicated that some principals are

> very good at it, but as principals do nothing else--a country club atmosphere, and that is not what schools are for. You need the atmosphere but also output and focus on that output. I would say though that after lack of interpersonal skills, it is a lack of knowledge--those who don't read, those who don't have a reflective practice or operation. We are not looking for nice guys. We want people who can do all of the other things as well.

Personal security was linked to the interpersonal skills level of principals by one superintendent. This superintendent saw that if one is good in the interpersonal areas, then "you are secure in yourself emotionally, intellectually, physically, etc., etc. Self-actualizing on all fronts possible creates the better individual who is the better team person, the better group person, etc." This superintendent saw that a secure self concept was linked to a preparedness to see other people's points of view, to having a high degree of empathy, and to being open-minded in approaching problems. This assisted in increasing the level of personal effectiveness and so had a positive effect on the level of school effectiveness.

Summary

Many of the inhibitors for the less effective principals identified by the grouping of questionnaire responses were associated with lack of components of the the basic skills repertoire superintendents discussed under the factor *Principal as Nexus*. These included lack of communication skills, lack of vision enhancement for the benefit of the school, non commitment to self learning, and lack of management skills. Superintendents thought principals who were concerned with the school's attainment of its goals had high expectations of staff and gave feedback to staff about their performance in relation to goal achievement. Administrative demands were not permitted to displace energy from goal achievement. These aspects were not part of the operating practice of the less effective principals.

The inhibitors cited for the group of more effective principals were, but for one exception, associated with the necessity for improving the level of skills already in evidence. The exception was mentioned by five superintendents. They perceived a lack of balance between the principal's professional life and non-working activities.

During interviews, the eight superintendents focussed on four factors that inhibited the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness. The first was the lack of support for principals from superintendents, and the second was principal's lack of interpersonal skills. This was linked with the third, principals who lacked personal security. The fourth inhibitor to the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness was a non-learning principal with a closed mind, a principal who lacked empathy and who was not prepared to consider the needs of others.

Constraints to the Attainment of School Effectiveness

The responses to item 59 in the questionnaire, "What three key factors stop each school from achieving maximum effectiveness?" were analyzed according to the overall school effectiveness rating given in item 57. Answers to the item 59 were placed into two groups. The responses were placed into the first group, hereafter called "less effective schools," if the school received an overall effectiveness rating of 1 (non-effective), 2 (slightly effective) or 3 (moderately effective). The schools that received an overall effectiveness rating of 4 (highly effective) or 5 (extremely effective) were placed into the second group designated "more effective schools."

Responses from the nineteen superintendents to the constraints on the "less effective schools" category were such that the ineffectiveness of the principal was mentioned 16 times. Frequently associated with the mention of principal ineffectiveness were the qualifying comments of lack of an appropriate skills base and the principal's lack of up-to-date professional knowledge. The poor communication skills of the principal were mentioned by six superintendents. Five superintendents were specific in mentioning that the principals lacked an understanding of the change process while six of superintendents mentioned that within the less effective schools there was a specific lack of professional development and curriculum development activities.

The principals' lack of an appropriate skill base also contributed to poor decision-making processes. This was mentioned by five superintendents, while three mentioned the crisis management style of the principal as a factor that inhibited the attainment of maximum effectiveness. Six schools were seen to lack an owned vision of what the school was aiming to achieve, while four schools lacked a plan to articulate how the vision was going to be achieved. Two superintendents thought that less effective schools had very poor resource management processes. According to the superintendents, the school vision, plan for achieving that vision, and resource management were all the responsibility of the principal.

Seven comments were made by superintendents about principals in the less effective schools having low expectations of staff and students; four superintendents said the low expectations were compounded because the principal did not confront teachers even if they failed to meet the very minimal standards set within the school. It can be seen that all of the responses about constraints on these less effective schools were attributed to the principal.

In the "more effective schools" category many of the inhibitors were linked to principal performance but they were not stated in such a strong, negative way. Seven superintendents said the schools were not definite enough in setting priorities for action and were therefore attempting to achieve too much too quickly. This was seen as a deficiency in the principal's management of the school.

Four superintendents thought that the system did not give these more effective schools sufficient professional development time to assist the principal in the change processes, while four more superintendents thought that the principals were inhibited by a lack of resources. Three superintendents mentioned that several staff "did not fit" within the scenario the school was attempting to generate, while rapidity of staff turnover was a cause of limiting another school's effectiveness. The rapid changeover of staff meant that while retraining of new staff occurred, energy was being diverted from goal attainment .

Six superintendents mentioned the need for a balance between the work and personal lives of staff members. The high energy level displayed and the commitment to the job was thought to be potentially hazardous to the mental health of the participants. Other aspects mentioned by superintendents were the necessity for more attention to cultural and symbolic activities within the school, more attention to monitoring the congruence between stated objectives and actual practice the conservatism of the community, the inexperience of the principal, student diversity, the lack of specialist teachers, the need for greater emphasis to be placed on developmental supervision, more shared leadership, and the officiousness of a deputy principal.

During the interviews, the eight superintendents were asked to identify the one factor that most inhibited the attainment of maximum effectiveness for schools. All of the superintendents thought thought that the inhibitor was, as stated by one, a deficiency "obviously with the principal." The most frequently mentioned deficiency was the principal's lack of an appropriate knowledge and skills. According to one superintendent, there

> are other factors that you could cite, for example a principal could inherit a moribund school with teachers who are so anti, so negative that it almost makes it impossible. A principal could have a parent community that is so turned off that it will take a hell of a lot of time, but if you have an effective leader in the school, then change and improvement will occur.

Superintendents indicated that a school was ineffective when there was an ineffective principal. The skills a principal required were summarized by the superintendent who said,

> By an effective leader I mean a person who has knowledge; skills and abilities in terms of interpersonal skills, communication skills, is a listener and learner, a person who understands change, a person who has good processes for decision-making involving people, a person who understands curriculum development and professional

> development, a person who supervises staff. A person who has all of these things going will take an ineffective school and will over time turn it into an effective school.

The only other aspect mentioned by superintendents as a constraint on school effectiveness was the inability of the principal to generate a central vision for the school. One superintendent said "Where there is no sense of direction, when everybody is going their own way without a common purpose," then you will never get a truly effective school. This was repeated by the superintendent who thought that a vision was the basis for cooperation. A school was less effective when there were "people who don't see the need to cooperate, where there is not a common purpose or vision about what the school stands for." The efforts and directions are then haphazard and goal achievement was left to chance.

Summary

Superintendents were consistent in their questionnaire responses in attributing to the principals of less effective schools the responsibility for inhibiting attainment of maximum school effectiveness. In the more effective schools category, superintendents saw the principal as a contributing factor to the non-attainment of maximum school effectiveness. However, they did not assert this so strongly nor see it as the major factor. Also mentioned within the more effective schools category were system deficiencies. These included the provision of insufficient staff development time, insufficient resources, provision of inappropriate staff, and rapidity of staff turnover. Six of the 19 superintendents indicated a lack of balance between personal life and working life was an inhibitor to the attainment of maximum school effectiveness.

During the interviews the superintendents were emphatic that a principal who lacked appropriate skills and knowledge was a major inhibitor for the attaininment of maximum school effectiveness. Two of the superintendents interviewed thought that the lack of a central system vision and statement of expectations was a major inhibitor. Nonetheless, the coordination of a central purpose within the school was a key aspect of the principal's role in producing an effective school. This aspect was mentioned by all superintendents at some stage during their interview.

Chapter Summary

Parents, principals, and superintendents indicated that the provision of adequate resources were critical to the attainment of maximum school effectiveness. Parents were concerned about the number of teachers and the provision of support staff. Principals were concerned about the staffing formulae and the increased numbers of teachers who would suffer displacement. They saw that this would have a negative effect on teacher morale which would then be a constraining factor for the attainment of maximum school effectiveness. Superintendents were concerned about the constraints imposed on schools because of the provision of inappropriate staff and the high staff turnover in some school locations.

Principals and superintendents saw that ineffective staff professional development programs inhibited the attainment of maximum school effectiveness. Principals in their questionnaire responses drew attention to the multiple demands placed on them and the lack of time to achieve ends as major inhibitors to school effectiveness.

All groups in the interview gave much more credence to the abilities of the principal. They believed that an effective principal improved the effectiveness of a school. All people interviewed placed a great deal of emphasis on the interpersonal skills repertoire of the principal. If there were deficiencies, they inhibited the attainment of maximum effectiveness. The interpersonal skill level of the principal was seen to affect the ability of the school to form a cohesive, central vision and an agreed upon set of goals. The attainment of these goals needed team work. If the principal could not get a focus for the school or establish a team approach to the achievement of that purpose, then both the principal and the school were seen to be ineffective.

As well as the interpersonal skill level of the principal, the non-approachability of teachers was seen to be a contributing factor to school ineffectiveness by the parents. Parents wanted to feel able to contact the school on any issue and to be listened to with empathy. This might mean that a principal or teacher would need to admit to having made a mistake. Failure to do this caused frustration for parents and reflected negatively on the school. This approachability links with parental participation. Parental participation was seen to contribute to school effectiveness, but the level of such participation was definitely linked to the attitudes of the staff and principal. According to parents, non-utilization of parent skills and abilities constrained the attainment of school effectiveness.

As well as focussing on the interpersonal skill level of the principal and the attainment of a central purpose for a school, superintendents indicated that principals had not received sufficient support from them. This had inhibited principals' attainment of effectiveness and so decreased the potential effectiveness level of schools. Superintendents indicated they needed to focus their activities on the principals and assist them with their personal learning and growth. In superintendents' opinion, non-learning principals were definitely linked to ineffective schools.

Several superintendents stressed the necessity of a balance between a principal's professional life and personal time and space. They were concerned that the work habits and demands placed on more effective principals did not promote good mental health practices.

Parents thought that the discontinuity of experiences that their children received inhibited school effectiveness. The lack of continuity was caused by the leave provisions of teachers and the number of contract teachers within the school system.

This chapter has examined the constraints that inhibit the attainment of maximum overall principal effectiveness and maximum overall school effectiveness as perceived by each respondent group. The next chapter examines the strategies suggested by parents, principals, and superintendents for overcoming these constraints.

CHAPTER 9

STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

This chapter builds on the identified constraints of principal effectiveness and school effectiveness identified by each respondent group in the previous chapter and discusses the strategies suggested for the improvement in principal effectiveness and school effectiveness. The strategies of each group are first examined separately and then compared for any similarities that may exist.

Parents' Strategies

The purpose of this part of the chapter is to provide information to answer the following research question which in part guided this study:

Question 20. What strategies are proposed by parents for the improvement of principal effectiveness and school effectiveness?

Apart from several declarations about the changes that could be made to the curriculum offerings of schools and the removal of bureaucratic barriers and associated "red tape," all the strategies for the improvement of schools focussed on activities and functions carried out or fostered by the principal. The major foci for improvements proposed by parents were communication skills of staff, professional development of principals, increasing parental participation, and the marketing of education.

Communication Skills

This aspect received considerable comment from parents as the area most requiring attention for the improvement of schools. Staff and particularly principals need extraordinary communication skills. Parents who had approached a school and not had an issue resolved to their satisfaction frequently mentioned that they thought that their concern had not been heard. "Being heard" was linked to approachability of principals and staff. Parents were sensitive to being heard and having people "do an active listening bit" but then having no action resulting from the intervention. Parents recognized that principals deal with a myriad of people and organizations and therefore principals need a high level of mediation skills to negotiate the conflicting demands being made on them and their school resources. One parent said that if courses were to be offered for principals, "one of the biggest things would be the attention to mediator skills. The poor man has to deal with parents, teachers, students. He has to make himself available and get on with everybody around the school, the ancillary staff, the works." It was also seen that the principal needed a high level of interpersonal skill to be the motivator of the school team and so producing a high standard in the work of the teachers. One parent summarized the thoughts of many parents when saying "The big problem is in communication or lack of it between principals and teachers and students. The principal is the administrator and chief motivator of the teachers. The teachers need to be motivated enough or encouraged enough to continue to improve their performance." The principal was seen as the motivational hub of the school, and as such he/she needed to like people and be able to build relationships with all persons. One aspect of the principal's interpersonal skills repertoire that was frequently mentioned by parents was the ability to motivate the entire team. Skill development in this area was seen as a way to improve the effectiveness of schools. "Motivation is the thing. If you have a motivated principal, then you have a hope."

Parents thought it was the Education Department's responsibility to motivate the principals and several specifically mentioned superintendents for this role. As one parent indicated "What you have to do to motivate principals is to get them to see the vital importance of their position in the school and how so much rests on them so it gets passed down through the ranks of the school." Another parent thought that principals needed to be "Real people persons and have a genuine concern for and liking of other people." This was a common feeling among parents. As a means of improving schools it was thought that the process used for the selection of principals should address this issue. Parents were of the opinion that if a person with an inappropriate disposition and personal communication skills became principal, then the school suffered and this was detrimental to the students.

One aspect mentioned repeatedly by parents was approachability. It was seen as essential that principals be empathetic to parents and that principal training or selection processes reflect this emphasis. Parents believed that the role modelling of approachability by the principal influenced the way the rest of people in the school made themselves available to parents. One parent, when discussing principal visibility and involvement, said:

> I like to see principals in some cases get more involved: to be visibly more approachable, to be more approachable to the children so you don't have this little tin god effect. . . . If you have this unapproachable person who represents the top of the tree, the atmosphere goes down.

One chairperson of a School Council said that approachability was especially crucial in a lower socio-economic area that already suffered from a multiplicity of deprivations. If the parents felt that they could not approach the principal, then one more avenue to services was cut off from them. Therefore the selection procedures should look more closely at matching potential principals and the areas to which they are appointed. Some parents indicated that principals having the right to transfer mitigated against this principle operating:

> Principals should be matched more with the area and the school and its needs. When you get a principal who has never experienced the problems that are endemic in our area, she has no idea that there isn't enough money to pay all of the year's fees up front. . . . When you have never experienced not having the money to pay things, it is very difficult to relate to. It works both ways, because a lot of the parents feel that they can't go to her if there is a problem, be it financial or personal home problems, because that barrier of experience is there.

Another parent from a lower socio-economic community stated that:

> A lot of parents won't go up to the school. They are really too frightened from their own school days. . . . However nowadays principals are trying to equal it out more, but you still have parents who don't know that. . . . The principal has to take steps to break that feeling down. It is no good just saying you are welcome and can come in any time. That will not get them in. It all stems back to word-of-mouth and what experiences people have had with the principal.

Parents indicated that principals needed to be sensitive to parental reticence and to construct mechanisms to actively encourage parents to approach the school. Parents who are rebuffed or feel slighted quickly pass that information on. Word-of-mouth was frequently mentioned by parents as a way they obtained information. One indicated, "I get a lot of information over the back fence, as it were." This again reinforces the importance of schools dealing effectively with all approaches to them. Bad news and controversy quickly spread throughout a school community.

Summary

Parents constantly indicated that principals are the nexus of the communication channels and therefore need to maintain very high levels of two-way communication with students, staff, parents, and other extraneous organizations and people. Central to the high calibre of interpersonal skills required by the principal was a genuine concern for and liking of people. This would enhance empathy for the viewpoint of other people. Selection procedures needed to address this aspect and look at the skills repertoire of potential principals. Matching of principals to particular schools was seen as important, and some parents thought that principals having the right of transfer diminished this possibility. Matching was seen as particularly necessary when countless principals lacked an awareness of many of the life experiences of the parents within some school catchment areas.

Professional Development

Aspects requiring attention within professional development included the management training of principals. It was recognized that the responsibilities of the principal's position required more than a good teaching background. Several parents mentioned that it would be a disaster to appoint a person to the position who had no teaching background. As one parent said, a principal "would need to have good teaching skills so would have to have been a teacher so he can relate to the teachers and their problems." Stated another way, one parent thought that the principal

> should be a good teacher because he/she needs to understand what it is all about. To put somebody from a non-teaching background, a marvellous administrator but a non-teacher in as principal, would be a disaster. He/she wouldn't understand what is involved. Teaching ability is important.

Given the required background as a teacher, parents thought that the ongoing training of the principal required recognition of the different facets of the position. One parent said,

> I guess they need special training. I don't know if there is special training for them as opposed to what they get for teaching, because it is in many ways a whole new ball game. It is built on top certainly of teaching knowledge and ability--but it requires many different skills and emphases over what teaching requires.

Parents saw principals as running large organizations; with current tight monetary restrictions, it was essential that they have good management skills. Many parents expressed this opinion, but one said:

> I think it is important for him to be a manager. I know it sounds horrible, but schools are more of a business. The school has to be run like a company, really. There is money coming in and decisions have to be made on how that money can be best spent. There are employees to direct in the right direction. I think that they need more training in administering and managing than just in teaching. . . . The principal has to ensure that the resources are used in the best way and he has to decide how those resources are going to be used. The leadership qualities are important. It is a big job and far more than just a trained teacher can handle.

A component of successful management is the procedure used to staff an organization. If it is acknowledged that the *Principal as Nexus* influences the school, then appointment to the leadership team should maximize the potential of that team to influence and improve the school. One parent indicated that care should be given to matching the principal and deputy principal so that they complement each other:

> If you have got a principal who is not really--well he is forward thinking but like a lot of parents have said to me, "I think some other school has already had his best years,"--in a case like that you really do need a deputy principal who is a goer. Somebody to encourage and push and bring--well we know the best of him is there, but he doesn't very often show it. If you get a good deputy principal that can happen.

This was a reflection of the team concept so frequently mentioned. Tenure of position was also mentioned. It was thought that tenure could be inhibiting accountability. However if tenure were limited, parents thought it would also be necessary to offer alternative career choices to principals which did not negatively affect their security or self-concept if they chose not to continue. Given the complexity of the administrative demands on the principal, one parent saw that it was necessary for the principal to keep in touch with the fundamental operation of teaching in the classrooms: "They can become involved in so many administrative things they can forget about the teachers and children."

Rejuvenation of principals was an aspect mentioned by several parents. They saw that there was a necessity to keep growing and developing throughout one's career. One parent lamented the lack of revitalization at their school and said

> I get a gut feeling that principals can be a lot better than what they are. Our school seems to be getting stale, not going any where and not doing anything. The kids are getting a good education but there are lots more that could happen I am sure.

Parents perceived that if principals were involved in their own ongoing learning and professional development, then it would transfer to the school and the school would remain vital. Parents consistently expressed a desire to know that their school was up-to-date in its teaching methodology and course content. They sought assurance that their children were receiving the best education it was possible for them to get; they wanted to have the teachers and principals attending in-service courses and conducting such courses at the school.

Summary

Principals are involved in the management of complex organizations, and parents saw the need for management training to be provided. Principals need to be involved in a continuous learning process focussing on the managerial aspects of the school as well as the professional component of the organization. However, management demands should not intrude upon the ability of the principal to maintain an awareness of the role of the classroom teacher and of the necessary interaction between teacher and students.

Parents frequently commented on the team leadership responsibility component of the principal's role, and one parent saw that the selection of the deputy principal was crucial for the development of a leadership team for the benefit of the total school. Parents linked increased accountability to the concept of limited tenure for principals.

Parental Participation

Most parents thought that it was necessary to increase the level of parental involvement within the activities of the school. Increasing the level of participation meant a change from the school's just listening and acting upon parental advice to an increase in parent presence in the classroom and for a clearly defined role in all decision-making processes within the school. One parent said, "I just think that principals need to make sure that they keep parents involved as much as is possible in a school." Parents frequently mentioned that parental participation was high in the junior primary classrooms but much lower in the primary rooms. They felt that the primary teachers seem less able to cope with the presence of parents in their rooms but, as one parent said, there are signs of this changing:

> In the junior primary we have an open invitation to go up there any time and talk to a teacher or the principal. It is very slowly occurring in the primary school, but they still like the old traditional way of ring up, make an appointment, let us know that you are coming. . . . It is fantastic in the junior primary and slowly changing in the primary.

The level of parental participation that has been encouraged in junior primary schools has changed the expectations of parents, and they now perceive that a change should occur in the primary classes.

The Education Department has issued a new policy on parental participation, and this required schools to articulate the part parents will play in the decision-making processes within the school. Parents saw it as a positive step which one parent provided a way for the school to "reflect community needs and attitudes, and really the best way for this to happen is with parental participation in the decision-making within the school." However, the level of participation was seen as a direct reflection of the principal's attitude, and the move to increase the level of parent participation would require extensive work with the principal.

Marketing of Education

Many parents commented on the negative press that education received in the larger circulation daily papers. However, many of these same parents were pleased with the positive coverage given by the local suburban papers. School newsletters were seen as a positive means of communication, but they were not effective with non-parent populations.

Principals were seen as the nexus between the school, parents, and the wider community. In particular, parents saw that it was up to the principal to sell the school. One parent said principals should, "before school and after school, walk around out in the yard, talking to parents, selling himself and the school." Parents thought that senior Education Department personnel should utilize the media and consistently portray the positive things occurring within the school system. Several parents suggested that the Education Department should utilize the services of a marketing consultant. Such a consultant would then be available for increasing the skill level of parent groups, principal groups, and personnel within the Area Education Office.

Summary

Apart from several references to the changes that could be made to the curriculum offerings of schools and the removal of bureaucratic barriers and "red tape," all the strategies for the improvement of schools focussed on activities and functions carried out or fostered by the principal. The major foci proposed by parents were communication skills, professional development of principals, increasing parental participation, and the marketing of education.

The communication skills of the principal were a major concern to parents. The principal acts as a nexus within the school, so any deficiencies in the level of interpersonal skills of that person would affect all constituents. Parents thought that professional development of principals and the pre-service training of potential principals should give attention to honing these skills.

Parents saw that principals were a powerful role model and their approach to their own ongoing learning was seen as important. Principals needed to demonstrate their continuous personal learning in the management and professional components of the school.

Parents saw that limited tenure of principals was linked to a possible increase in accountability. However they thought that if tenure was limited to a set term, then other career options need to be provided for those principals who did not wish to remain in the role.

The increased participation of parents in the decision-making processes of the school was seen as desirable by a very large majority of parents. State parent organizations should address this need by increasing their training programs, but at the same time the Education Department should not abdicate its responsibility for training parents and principals. This was seen as an essential component of the implementation of the new policy initiative in the area of parental participation.

Principals' Strategies

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to provide information to answer research question 21, which in part guided the study:

> Question 21. What strategies are proposed by principals for the improvement of principal effectiveness and school effectiveness?

Principals were asked how they would improve the effectiveness of schools and the effectiveness of principals. In addressing the issue of improvement of school effectiveness, principals mentioned the need to increase parental participation, raise the expectations of what students could achieve, have the total system as well as individual schools articulate detailed plans for the achievement of goals, give increased attention to the selection of leaders at all levels within education; provide exemplary leadership training, and look at the level of human and financial resources.

For improved principal effectiveness it was necessary to attend to four issues: the level of parental participation, the selection of principals, the role of superintendents in the principal's development, and the principal's control over resources.

Parental Participation

Principals saw increasing the participation of parents as a way of breaking down the barriers between schools and parents. Participation could have a positive effect on the communication flow between the school and the home and could give each group a greater understanding of the problems and challenges the other faced. Children could benefit as well, because they would see the cooperation between school and home and hence receive congruent messages about the value of both. Principals, though supporting an increased parental participation in the management of schools, were unsure as to how this should proceed. Many indicated that both they and parents required developmental in-service courses. Some principals suggested that this would require cooperation between the Education Department and the state-wide parent organizations.

Selection of Principals

Principals indicated that parental input was valuable for the principal selection process. One principal summarized the opinion of many by saying:

> The process of selection has to in some way monitor past performance. One of the ways of monitoring that would be to get information from the work place where the principal was or is, if they are re-applying. . . . One of the important things I would do would be to have the opportunity to meet with the School Council where the person has worked without the presence of that person. A discussion with the School Council about the school's program and the person's involvement would be of enormous benefit. I would like the same opportunity to talk to the parents who are on the School Council, because they would have a fair idea of things around the school and what other parents think. I would also get a reaction from the staff.

Apart from the emphasis on past performance indicated above, other important factors mentioned by many principals that should receive greater attention in the principal selection were communication ability, giving evidence that they are "people persons", evidence of a personal professional development program, demonstrated curriculum development skills, demonstrated change management skills, and a sound educational philosophy that could be translated into a personal vision for the school to which the the principal was applying.

Professional Development

Giving attention to the principal selection process without the the total educational system giving attention to its goals was seen to be counter-productive. As one principal said "To improve the effectiveness of a school, the system must know where it wants schools to go and then train the leaders so that they can go down that path." Another principal, reinforcing the previous comment, indicated:

> There has been lots of talk over the last two years about performance appraisal, and there are models everywhere. I think that the system ought to come up with one model and workshop that model so that every leader has been to that workshop. I am not saying that every leader should then use that model for their school, but at least every leader should be required to go to the workshop. At the moment, it is up to the principal whether he or she goes to the workshops. So we have some people who on a ten-point scale are at 9 and some who haven't reached 1. The system needs to gets serious about knowing where it wants its schools to go and then train principals accordingly.

The concept of principals demonstrating their ongoing professional learning was considered important, but the system needed a process to acknowledge the importance of this. One principal said, "I would like to see some sort of basic guidelines for school staff and credits for development conferences for a year. . . . I am talking across the system. It means that the system gives some recognition to continued learning to indicate the value being placed on it." Principals thought that a step that would give positive recognition to the importance of ongoing learning and development would be the process of superintendents negotiating an individual personal learning program with each principal. The reorganization of the superintendency for this to occur would indicate system recognition of the importance of this facet. Still one principal indicated that it was difficult to generalize about the directions superintendents should follow with the professional development of principals:

> They are as different as the students in any class. Given that principals success determines school success, I would then have an individual learning program

> negotiated for each principal and have the superintendent monitor that like I monitor the staff development program in my school. It has three strands: individual, small group and total staff elements. Principal programs should be the same.

Many principals were of the opinion that their skill development was left to chance and that no person or group had accepted the responsibility for it. Principals saw that the system expected them to be responsible for staff learning but did not have a congruent practice for their learning. One principal, speaking with considerable feeling, said,

> principals are largely untrained. All of the training that I had for this job was incidental. "Trained" is not the right word and I would like to avoid that altogether. Most principals don't have a chance to develop the skills. There is not the emphasis on skill development as there is in business before one becomes the manager. Maybe there should be Master's degrees in Education which directly focuses on people becoming school principals, a theory and supervised practice combination degree.

Principals saw that the chance learning approach adopted by the system demonstrated, in the words of one principal, that "we are very naive as professionals not to teach what is required to principals but rely on all of them to hopefully find out later. Poor teaching practice." Randomness in the learning of the total principal group was compounded by poor evaluation processes; principals thought these issues should be addressed.

Principals indicated that the system had moved away from giving meaningful feedback to principals. According to one principal, the system "should make more clear its expectations of principals and then give meaningful feedback about the meeting or non-meeting of the expectations". This function was seen by many principals as the domain of the superintendents, but it had been negated over the years. One principal said:

> The leadership part by those who supervise us has tremendous implications for us. . . . Some of the most exciting things that happened to me in my teaching career were when the superintendent . . . came in and opened up a case on the desk and it was full of books that he had read and he was able to challenge me to do the same. The superintendents really knew what we were doing for self and school in terms of improvement. That is being lost, because people are talking about school improvement through test improvement. What has happened to school improvement through ideas?

The system's action in reorganizing the functions of the superintendents so that their prime focus was on the professional development of principals was frequently commented on and seen as a way of overcoming the "rudderless ship" of expectations of principal performance. One principal said,

> I certainly hope that the new model for superintendents works. Superintendents need to work solidly with principals and develop programs backed by large and small groups of principals in learning activities and professional growth. I think that the new structure is to be lauded. It will both support and challenge the principals.

Be that as it may, it was seen necessary that the system find concrete ways of publicly valuing learning. This could be achieved, according to one principal, by putting financial resources into "systematic retraining for a year or for a period of time so that a person could teach in a different area or take a different job." Another suggestion of principals was for the system to make more promotion positions available to primary schools. This would allow principals to delegate some management tasks and allow them to concentrate on "major things like the curriculum functions that are often lost in the application of a plethora of little band aids." One principal summarized the thoughts expressed by many when saying:

> The suggestion that I have is that there be some more promotion, more leadership positions made available in primary schools. One of the difficulties is that the only persons to delegate jobs are the deputy or the ancillary staff. Everyone else to whom you delegate a job is in some sense doing that job in his/her own time. If you are a full time classroom teacher and take on another task, it is in addition to classroom responsibilities and they should not be allowed to suffer. Nor should we always kill the willing. It doesn't have to be more time; it can be more salary, because then you can expect more. That would allow the principal more time to concentrate on achieving the vision.

Many principals thought the achievement of vision could be enhanced by going outside of the educational district seeking alternative management models and ideas. One principal said:

> School principals often tend to mix in the same circles and talk to the same people, especially if schools are in close proximity. We need to open up that circle so that their vision is widened simply by mixing with principals away from themselves, get principals in other organizations, and get people in leadership roles right out of education for periods of time. . . . Therefore the one thing I would like to suggest is that we work on broadening principals' visions. We need to work on that if we are to improve our schools.

This idea was expressed by many principals who thought that other government agencies and the private sector could contribute to their learning. However, the prevailing ethos was that the ideas and processes used in the non-educational settings would not work in schools. Some principals thought these attitudes needed to be re-examined and rightful credence given to the ideas and processes that were transferrable from other service agencies and from the private sector.

Resource Provision

Coupled with direction from the system, principals saw a need to have a greater say about the allocation of staff to their school. One principal said:

> Provision of resources is critical. I am not asking for every teacher to be outstanding, with incredibly high commitment. That would be too boring and dull. I certainly feel that the quality of our resources, however, is vital. A significant number of staff that need a lot of help can be detrimental to the overall school performance.

One principal saw that control of the human resource meant giving principals the power to hire staff. "I would like to see more and more of the resources located in the schools, and I would like to see schools having the right to hire their own staff but not necessarily to fire. I would be very happy with the right to hire. If I hire the wrong person, then that is my problem."

Principals also suggested that more of the financial resource management could be handed to schools. This would include the opportunity to trade off staff members for ancillary staff and/or additional resources or to operate in the reverse way. Some principals were of the opinion that School Councils could save money in contracting building work and thought that these savings should then accrue to the schools concerned.

Summary

Principals believed that improving the effectiveness of schools was closely linked with improving the effectiveness of principals. Apart from the processes used to allocate financial resources to schools, principal selection of staff, and the reorganization of the superintendency, all other improvement efforts should focus on the improvement of the effectiveness of principals. Of paramount importance in this process was the "training" and subsequent professional development of principals. The changed focus for superintendent actions in this area was "lauded," but the system needed to find a concrete way of publicly acknowledging the value being placed on continuing self-education and professional development. Principals thought that ideas from a wider educational context and from private enterprise should also be utilized in the professional development of principals. The establishment of a specific graduate degree for training of principals was mentioned, as was the provision of paid professional development leave and extra promotion positions or responsibility allowances for teachers in primary schools.

Superintendents' Strategies

The purpose of this section is to answer research question 22, "What strategies are proposed by superintendents for the improvement of principal effectiveness and school effectiveness?" This was also addressed during interviews with the eight superintendents.

In accordance with their perception of the strong, positive relationship between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness reported earlier, superintendents thought that improvement of principal's performance led to an improvement of their schools. Most advocated "some systematic, regular, and reliable forms of support" for principals. It was seen that principals and their development should be the focus of superintendent activities. One superintendent echoed the thoughts of most others when he/she said "I wouldn't exclude doing other things but I just don't believe that in a system you can do anything very worthwhile unless you have good, sound, confident, competent leaders in the schools." Superintendents thought that principals

> need a supervision program just like the teachers do. I think that means saying to them, "What are your goals, what are your actual plans, what are your strengths?" So it is sitting down and talking like we are talking in a sense, and asking questions, listening to what a person has to say and is saying what about this aspect, or have you thought about doing this. It is professional development, sharing, collaborative stuff, working together.

The processes to be used would depend upon the individual, but the activities would recognize the principles of adult learning. Concomitant with individually negotiated personal learning programs for principals was the necessity for the group learning of principals. This would enable a group focus on improvement in the operation of specific aspects of the system. Superintendents saw that the professional development program for a group of principals within a district should have the same structure as they expected principals to use in facilitating staff professional development. If there was an expectation about continued learning for all adults within the organization, then superintendents indicated they would need to model this to principals. According to one superintendent, "Some of the implications of what I have said is for people in the system above principals: superintendents and senior administrators must give leadership, create conditions, to support schools so that development can happen." The most tangible means of giving initial impetus to these programs would be with the provision of money--not money just for the actual programs but also money for approved study leave and to buy time to enable leaders to reflect on their practice. Time would be needed to remove the principals from the management of crisis activity, for principals to meet with their peers and discuss problems and innovations, to "simply absorb the implications of their practice." Superintendents thought that "schools must find ways to create time without the principal, librarian, deputy, non-contact teacher, etc., doing extra. We seem always to flog the willing." The enormous personal time commitment required of successful principals was of concern to superintendents and was mentioned by six superintendents as an inhibitor to the achievement of maximum effectiveness. The workaholic approach was seen to be incongruent with the messages being delivered through health curricula.

Superintendents indicated that in many avenues the necessity for a balanced lifestyle was espoused but inappropriate modelling was provided by some senior staff for the principals. This should change, because the inappropriate modelling tended to reinforce the excessive work habits of the principals.

When talking of specific courses, many superintendents agreed that, "Principals still need a lot of help in curriculum management, particularly in terms of goal setting, monitoring, evaluation, and staff involvement in these activities." To assist principals in curriculum management, however, the system needed to clarify its expectations of principals. The Education Department should also make clear its own plans and intentions for stated periods of time. Superintendents thought the total Education Department needed, in the words of one superintendent, "some sense of cohesiveness, some purpose, some identity and provision for individual differences. There just needs to be a whole lot of morale building: people recognized, expected to be competent, and helped to be." Many superintendents thought that effective principals were involved currently in their ongoing learning and development, but there was no system incentive or requirement for all to do so. One superintendent thought that educational organizations could learn from private enterprise in this area. The education system should encourage and support entrepreneurial principals. Their ideas should be communicated to others and they should be given recognition and rewards for outstanding improvements. This superintendent said:

> In industry, if someone is creative and finds a better way, that way soon becomes the norm and everybody is required to do it. Instead our principals will think of a thousand good reasons why they shouldn't have to do what that really good school is doing. Yet business units will say it has proven better, it is working better. That is the base line.

When a principal or school finds a better way of doing something, superintendents talk about it and hope that it will diffuse through the system. People are encouraged to visit the school, learn about the idea or innovation but nothing concrete is expected in terms of follow-up. One superintendent thought

> We sometimes don't challenge our people and force good practice on our people . We try to get them to arrive at it, and some don't. That worries me. If we expected the new approach to be implemented, the real entrepreneurs would improve yet again on that. We accept a lot of mediocrity without penalty.

Most superintendents thought the concept of direct penalty for non-achievement was offensive but countered with the need for positive system recognition of achievement. Superintendents thought that neither approach was seen to be operating.

Summary

Superintendents were unanimous in declaring that strategies which improved the performance of principals would result in improvement in the effectiveness of schools. Most superintendents advocated systematic and ongoing support for principals and their learning. The principal's professional development plan should incorporate the same elements that superintendents expected to see in a school professional development program. The components needed to be negotiated with each individual and would include personal as well as group learning.

Superintendents saw that the commitment to principal development required people hierarchically senior to them to reflect on their own practices. It was confessed that the modelling for principals by senior personnel had not been appropriate. Apart from modelling, senior personnel within the system needed to give concrete recognition to the importance of professional development. The most tangible way was through the provision of money, money to buy short-term and longer-term release time for principals. Superintendents thought that currently the system exploited the willing without penalizing the recalcitrant. This was reflected in the superintendents' concern for the amount of time highly effective principals gave to their job as against the time given to other components of their lives.

Finally, one superintendent thought that education should learn about the adoption of innovations from private enterprise. Once an innovation proved its worth, all industries adopted it as standard practice. It then became the basis for further entrepreneurial development. This is not common practice within education.

Chapter Summary

Parents identified three major strategies for improving the effectiveness of both principals and schools. They indicated that it was necessary to concentrate on the professional development of principals with particular emphasis on communication skills, increase the level of parent participation in the management of schools, and find ways to market education by raising the profile of education and schools in the media. Principals indicated four strategies for overcoming the inhibitors that they had identified. They were of the opinion that principal selection procedure needed to receive attention, parent participation levels in the management of schools needed to increase, the changed emphasis in the role of the superintendent needed to be utilized for principal development and training, and principals needed a greater control over the resources that they worked with. Superintendents stressed the positive correlation between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness, and they proposed a series of measures that focussed on the professional development of principals. They contended that this was the best way to produce a change in the overall effectiveness levels of schools.

Both principals and parents wanted an increase in the amount of parental participation in the management of schools, but neither group offered any strategies for this to occur other than workshops for both principals and parents. Principals thought that it would be necessary for the Education Department and the state-wide parent organizations to cooperate in mounting these workshops.

Principals saw that the changed role for superintendents was critical for increasing the level of professional development activities for principals. Nonetheless, they indicated that the need to clearly articulate the goals and directions for the total system. As one principal stated, "then train the leaders so they can go down that path." Parents were emphatic that principals' development must include aspects of management training. They saw that principals ran large organizations and had to be efficient with the utilization of financial and human resources. Another facet of the management training suggested by parents focussed on principals attaining a high level of mediation/negotiation skills. Irrespective of the attention given to the management aspects of the principal's role, parents stressed that it must not prevent principals from maintaining a high level of awareness of the interactions occurring within the classrooms.

Superintendents thought that there must be systematic, regular, and reliable support for principals. This support should be the focus of the superintendents' activities. Principals indicated that it was the role of the superintendent to give them meaningful feedback about the performance of their duties and to manage the learning of principals so that it was not left to chance. Superintendents recognized that if principals were expected to role model their own personal learning to assist with their school staff development programs, then the same applied to superintendents and other people in hierarchically superior positions to principals.

Superintendents indicated that the most effective way for the system to give recognition to the importance of the principals' professional development was with the provision of money, to buy time for short and long-term release from their duties. Principals saw the benefit in longer-term release and some indicated that a graduate degree focussing on the principalship would be highly desirable.

Superintendents thought that the education system should learn from private enterprise in the area of innovation. Entrepreneurial innovative principals should be given positive recognition and their innovations accepted across the system. The proven successful innovations should become the new norm and people should be encouraged to improve upon them.

Principals thought that it was essential that they be given more control over the resources of the schools. This included an ability to select staff, to move money between the various staff categories, and the ability to utilize financial savings for school priorities.

This chapter has identified the strategies proposed by parents, principals, and superintendents to overcome the constraints inhibiting the attainment of maximum principal effectiveness and maximum school effectiveness. The next chapter ascertains what aspects of the performance of a school prompt parents to intervene at the school or with the superintendent of schools. The presentation of data concludes with an examination of principal and superintendent responses to these parental interventions.

CHAPTER 10

PARENTAL INTERVENTIONS AND PRINCIPAL AND SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSES

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information to answer the following research questions which in part guided guided this study:

Question 23. What aspects of the operation of a school prompt parental intervention at the school or district level?

Question 24. How do principals and superintendents respond to parental interventions?

During interviews, parents were asked to describe a time when they had approached the school about some matter. Most spoke of approaches that were caused by a concern that they had about some aspect of their child's schooling. Parents were asked to explain the nature of the problem, the reaction from the school personnel involved, and the outcome of the intervention. While discussing with them the results of the intervention, their opinions were sought as to the appropriateness of the strategies offered by the school and of their level of satisfaction with the outcomes.

During interviews, principals were asked to describe an occasion when a parent had contacted the school. They were asked what had precipitated the contact and what happened as a result of the contact. They were also asked if they were they happy with the outcome, and if the school had received further parent contact about the same issue. This line of questioning was repeated several times with each principal in an attempt to seek any patterns that may have existed.

Superintendents during their interviews were asked the same questions as principals.

Parental Interventions: Parents' Perceptions

Of the 32 parents interviewed, 22 had at some time contacted the school because of a specific concern, while six had contacted the school to express their pleasure at some thing that had been done for or on behalf of their child. Contacts were initiated because of a concern about student behavior, student academic attainment, personality conflict between teacher and child, allocation of the student to a particular class, student social interaction with peers, concerns about physical and mental safety of the child, or to advise the school of a medical condition. The contacts expressing appreciation were as a result of care given to an injured child, steps teachers had taken to diagnose learning problems or to be involved with other personnel in solving specific learning disabilities, or of special events that had been organized by the schools. Of those parents who had complained about some aspect of the school's operation eleven indicated that they were happy with the response they gained from the school, seven were dissatisfied, and four were not satisfied but decided to wait and see if the passage of time or the start of a new academic year would resolve the issue.

Issues that Cause Parental Intervention at the School

Many parents expressed a reluctance to approach the school about a problem. This ~~links with~~ their concern about the impressions schools give concerning approachability, discussed in Chapter 5. Where schools were seen to be very approachable, parents were warm in their praise of them. In most cases parents waited to see if their or their child's initial concern would solve itself or the situation improve without action from them. When this did not occur, they then approached the school. Most parents indicated that they contacted the classroom teacher in the first instance. One aspect that was frequently mentioned by parents was their approach to the school because of concern about the behavior of their child. Some parents indicated that this contact had been initiated by the school.

Student Behavior

A typical case related by a parent who approached the school because "my daughter was coming home from school with odd comments. After investigating, I realized that she was being teased at school. This was upsetting her quite badly." The parent approached the principal in this instance, because during the term break the classroom teacher had changed. The parent found the principal to be very understanding:

> He gave me a lot of help as to how I could help my daughter handle the situation herself. Upon hearing what was going on in my daughter's class, he made a few reforms and talked to the children as a whole about teasing and putting other children down.

The strategies suggested by the principal worked and the problem was satisfactorily resolved.

In another instance involving teasing, the parent contacted the teacher because he/she thought it would make the child happy:

> To make my daughter happy I talked to her teacher. The teacher said that she would keep an eye on what was happening and perhaps talk to the other girls that were involved, but according to my daughter nothing happened about it.
>
> Interviewer So things didn't get better because of the contact with the school?
>
> No, but in some ways that was probably good because it would have singled her out if the teacher had made a big thing out of it. It would have made it harder for her to get on with the others.

The parent did not perceive that the approach initiated any action at the school, but on reflection the parent thought this appeared to be a good thing. Apart from concerns about the behavior of children, parents contacted the school if they thought there was a personality clash between the child and the teacher.

Personality Conflict

One instance where a parent approached the school was because she/he could see that there was a clash between the teacher and the child. The parent said:

> The teacher kept saying that he couldn't understand the child out and all of the rest of it. I wasn't happy about this. So I went and saw the principal on several

> occasions. There wasn't a great deal done; in fact I don't know if there was anything done with regard to contact between the teacher and principal.

After noticing further deterioration, the parent again contacted the principal. "The situations were really bad, real put-down situations. The further it went, the worse it got." Nothing happened and after a further week, in desperation, the parent again contacted the principal but was told to go and see the classroom teacher to sort it out. "I went and saw the classroom teacher and we had a few heated words. Not really bad, but he said that if he hadn't been a professional man he would have taken his coat off. I told him that he was too autocratic. I didn't really get very far." The problem was not resolved, and so

> in the end we went to our family doctor, most concerned about it because the child went berserk at home here on a couple of occasions. As soon as you mentioned school work, he would pick up the nearest thing and throw it around the room--something unreal.

The family doctor referred the parent to a pediatrician and treatment for the child's emotional state followed. The parent indicated that "at no stage was I happy about the way the school handled the situation. They never really did anything; they just hoped that the bloody problem would go away." In hindsight, the parent wished he/she had phoned the Area Office. "I wish I had done so now, because it might really have stirred the pot up." The parent was very disappointed because "there was not enough direction from the principal to the teacher. I tried to do it as fairly as I could, but I should have got onto the Area Office." The parent later indicated that he/she still feels resentment towards the school and for a time wondered whether to cease being a school council member. The parent decided against this course of action because of the perception that continued involvement was assisting his/her children's education.

A parent who contacted the school about the interaction between a daughter and the classroom teacher and who was happy with the outcome related the following sequence of events:

> The relationship between student and teacher was such that the student just wasn't achieving or learning. So I contacted the classroom coordinator, the person in charge of that year level in the unit [open space designed classroom block]. He expressed immediate concern, he thanked us for our interest in the situation, and he

> assured us that the problem would be looked into immediately. He set a time for a return phone call after the problem was assessed. When he phoned back, he gave me information about how they had looked at the problem and what could be done about it. That was talked over with me and the final resolution came out of that discussion. The promises were kept and now when we see him at school functions it will be a two-minute conversation to see that things are still OK. It is a fairly caring response. There is still awareness of my concerns and the problem was not just handled and dismissed.

As the parent indicated, commitments were made and the problem was jointly resolved. At a later point in the interview, the parent again indicated pleasure with the fact that the teacher still checked to ensure that the problem had not recurred or at least said "hello" in a social sense. The parent felt very comfortable with that and indicated that she/he would freely approach the school about any other concern that ever arose.

The level of satisfaction felt by parents with the outcome of their approach to a school could be linked to their perception of a fair hearing, genuine two-way communication and a jointly negotiated outcome.

Academic Attainment

A parent who was concerned about the attainment of her son in year six mathematics recounted the following succession of events:

> Stuart did not appear to be doing any work, did not have any homework, and he had a very blasé attitude about school in general. Hence I initiated a contact with the school.
>
> Interviewer How did you initiate the contact?
>
> I sent a note with Stuart to ask if I could see the teacher at an appropriate time after school and gave a choice of times I would be available.
>
> Interviewer What happened as a result?
>
> Well, after I found the teacher dozing in the staff room in his non-contact time, I managed to get a little sense out of him about Stuart. He just sort of said that there was no big problem. But I had reason to believe that there was a lot more behind it than that.

Not being happy with the outcome the parent decided to contact the Area Office to investigate what rights and options were available. What action could be reasonably expected of the school in satisfying parent concerns?

> I did go to the top in the Area Office but I didn't see the superintendent. I think I saw the senior education officer. I basically wanted to find out just what my rights as a parent were, what I should be able to expect from the school and the teacher, and how I could get information from a teacher in the school as to what was going on with my child.
>
> Interviewer What happened at the office?
>
> Absolutely nothing. He was sort of doing an active listening trick. "I have to listen but it is just another parent who has an unreal expectation about her own child. See, the principal is the first avenue, and if you get nowhere then we will listen to you again." I felt that I got it off my chest but it was a waste of my and his time. I can understand his position in that he could not step into a situation where the principal had not been involved.
>
> Interviewer Have you accepted the situation and left it there or is there something else that has occurred?
>
> I have accepted it and left it there. The situation improved somewhat at school and Stuart was allowed to join the older years for his maths and some other activities, but I have never ever been satisfied with how they handle him or extend him. It has been acknowledged but is considered to be [expressive sigh] a bit exhaustive for them to worry about.

The parent affirmed later in the interview that the family was moving interstate at the end of the school year and, because of this experience would enroll children in the State school system only if there was not a non-government school available within reasonable commuting distance. The parent perceived that because non-government schools competed for students they were more attentive to the needs of the students and the concerns of the parents.

A parent reporting satisfaction with an issue raised at the school indicated that the contact from the school was the first indication that the child was having learning problems. The initial contact came when the classroom teacher requested permission to have the child assessed by a speech therapist employed by the school system. Not being sure of the implications the parent contacted the Children's Hospital to seek information:

> I asked if they could explain it to me. They said to come in and we will run some tests to find out. When they ran the tests, they decided that he had problems in speech and motor coordination both fine and major. As a result of that, he had to go for assessments in different areas and then there was a group session with the heads of all the departments that had assessed him.

Following the assessment process at the Children's Hospital, the parent and class teacher were invited to attend a group session with all of the heads of departments who had assessed the child. The parent indicated,

> I was very lucky, because his class teacher immediately went without any hassle at all. As far as she was concerned, he was a student in her class and it was her right and obligation to be there. The principal backed it up 100% and supported her. When I came home, I was a little bit upset, but both she and the principal made a point of catching up with me at the earliest possible time at the school. It was a little meeting between the three of us to make sure that we had all got the same information and understanding out of the hospital meeting.

The school then mobilized its own support mechanisms and ,

> had a meeting between all of the potential teachers for this year and sorted out what would be the best course of action for both him and the teacher. I was very happy with the school's initial response and even 15 months down the line I am still pleased. They have been very supportive.

The parent indicated that of all of the parents attending the meeting at the hospital, there were few parents who had teachers present. Efforts at the school had been such that "I am very pleased with what I am getting. They are extremely supportive, very interested in what is going on, and it is not necessarily just the one person. It branches out and others keep up an interest too."

Class Allocation

Parents were most concerned about the process used by schools to allocate students to individual classes. The assignment of children to individual teachers is watched very closely and and can produce stress within the family. One parent divulged the steps taken when they were unhappy with the teacher that the child was to have. "Just last year I had a major concern with my daughter. She was going into a class and my wife was very concerned about the teacher." The parents approached the principal and asked that the child not be placed in that particular class.

> It was quite clear that he had no real intention of changing his opinion until we said, "Well, we best take our daughter out of the school if that is the way." It took decisive action from us rather than him making that decision. We both took the initiative to approach him and in a sense had to make the decision for him.

The discussion led to the wish being granted at the beginning of the year. The parents perceived it was not until they indicated that the child would go to another school if their concern was not met that action occurred. Until that time, they perceived that it was their listening to the reasons why the principal was putting the child into the class and the good things that it would mean for their child. The parents believed that this level of action--possible movement of the child to another school--was required for the principal to become aware of the depths of their concern.

A parent with a child attending another school recounted that information was sent home on the last day of school indicating that arrangements for the year four students would change significantly in the following year. Because of space requirements, some year four students would remain in the classroom block that housed the reception to year three students.

> This upset a lot of the year four students, and the parents were furious that about not told until the last day of term. That went down like a lead zeppelin! A lot of the year four children were saying that they had failed and were being kept down. Because parents knew I was on the school council, they were ringing me up and asking what they could do. Most were concerned because their children were upset.

The parent who was the School Council member was most reluctant to do any thing, even though her/his own daughter was involved. Nevertheless other parents, knowing of this parent's position on the Council, continued making contact during the summer vacation and expressed their concern. In the last week of the holidays, the parent wrote a letter to the principal. Thinking it might be dismissed as the concerns of only one parent, contact was made with all of the people who had broached the subject. Those parents who were at home signed the letter and it was presented to the principal.

> I really wanted to say that we did not appreciate being told on the last day of term. He should have invited us in before hand and told us of his intention, allowed discussion, and then worked out the possibilities. He refused to discuss it and our visit was terminated, but it was changed by the first day of school. He obviously wasn't impressed because he said to me, "You know what you have done will have consequences."

What the consequences were are not known by the parent, although it was referred to at a School Council meeting. "I was termed at one council meeting as the leader of the back yard mafia. That went down like a ton of bricks." Many of the parents were worried that their children might be victimized, and it "was one of the reasons that initially I was not going to do anything." The parents thought that the solution being proposed by the school might have been viable, but to change what had been the pattern for years on the last day of the term was very foolish. The parent indicated that parents had needed time to discuss the changes and to realize the implications of not taking that course of action. Channels were available for active parental participation and were considered essential by the parents in this type of decision-making.

Safety

Two cases detailed below are indicative of the types of concerns parents expressed about safety-related matters. The first was about supervision and awareness of where each child was at any particular time, and the second was about actual physical safety and the steps taken when a child was injured.

In the first situation, a parent became concerned when the child was not in the appointed place when the parent called to collect him after school. The parent indicated that the child had left the school during the day for a football match but was led to believe that he would be back at school for the normal dismissal time.

> I came to pick him up and after waiting for 20 minutes I was starting to get a little worried. I went around the school and saw some of the teachers. They didn't seem real concerned but they managed to follow up the teacher that he had gone on this trip with. They checked the teacher's room and found his brief case, so obviously he hadn't returned to the school and then gone home. I was told to be a little patient and they should be there soon. I went back and sat in the car for a half hour but by this time I was getting a little frustrated. I went back to the office again and this time the principal was passing by the office. I wasn't giving up without some following up being done because I was worried. The principal then managed to phone up where the match was held and found out that the students and teacher had only left two minutes earlier to come home. I wouldn't have minded if I had known beforehand. We should have known that they would be home late. There was no need for the worry and agitation I went through.

Clearly the parent perceived a personal higher level of concern for the safety of the child than the school and was distressed that the school failed initially to acknowledge that concern.

In the second case, a child fell from some playground equipment during a recess break and hurt her arm. The parent said:

> One Friday morning my daughter was brought over to me by one of the teachers because she had fallen off the slippery dip. I immediately took her to the doctor and he confirmed that her arm was broken. I was very upset that the school had not taken proper action and had at least seen that the arm was broken. I was working and had signed a form at the school to say that if anything happened to my child they had permission to take her to the doctors or for medical treatment as required. I expected the teachers to check it out and if not happy with it to take her to the doctor. . . . I don't think that the school took proper precautions. When I went up there the school was most concerned and most apologetic. They realized that they perhaps hadn't done the right thing and were most apologetic.
>
> Interviewer Were you happy that as a result of that visit that things did get better?
>
> No, not really, because it happened again to my child when she broke her other arm. The same thing happened again so they didn't learn from their mistake.

This was another indication of a parent perceiving that the school did not exhibit a sufficiently serious enough level of "duty of care" and, in this case, did not profit from the first experience to review or modify their procedures. However, the routine for students taking prescribed medication was seen in a positive light.

Medical

Parents were of the opinion that schools had well-defined procedures to deal with the requirements of students taking medication at school. If the procedures were not explained in the school handbook, then a telephone call to the school or a note to the classroom teacher initiated the required actions.

Some medical conditions of students required changes to be made to physical facilities. In these cases parents indicated that an approach by the principal to the Area Office got the procedures under way.

Summary

Parents visited the school when they perceived their child was not attaining academically at school, when the child was having problems interacting with peers, when there was concern for their child's safety, when there was a perception of a personality clash between the child and a teacher, or to advise the school of a medical condition. In most cases, the happiness of the student was the trigger for the parental contact with the school.

The first point of contact was with the classroom teacher. If the parent was not satisfied with the actions being taken by the teacher or if they perceived that the problem was not resolved, parents then contacted the principal. Many indicated that the first thing a principal asked them was whether they had discussed the matter with the classroom teacher. It would appear that the school routine for the handling of a complaint was well-known and most parents contact the teacher first. Only two parents indicated that they contacted the Area Office. Another parent wished he/she had, because he/she perceived that action would definitely have occurred much more rapidly.

Others parents provide a source of information to parents about the procedures to follow when contacting the school, and their support was an encouragement to continue if they were not happy with the outcome of the initial response. The problems on which they approached the school were satisfactorily resolved for 11 parents and not satisfactorily resolved for seven parents. Where the problem was not resolved, four of the parents decided to wait out the year to see if time and/or a new teacher the following year would solve the issue. The others did not see it necessary to pursue the matter.

Parental Interventions: Principals' Perceptions

The following is an analysis of principals' responses to interventions made by parents when some aspect of the school or its operation was not meeting the effectiveness criteria parents deemed necessary.

Issues that Cause Parental Intervention at the School

Principals reported that parents contacted the school by telephone or came to see them when they had concerns about some aspect of the performance of their child's teacher, social or behavioral problems being experienced by their child, a perceived lack of academic progress for a child, the allocation of a child to a class, or for factors outside of the domain of the school.

Teacher Performance

Most principals could cite instances of parents contacting the school because of their concern about the teacher responsible for teaching their child. One principal said, "It frequently comes up where there are tensions between children within a family or between a teacher and a child. They are usually quickly resolved." This type of approach required sensitivity as well as a lack of defensiveness from the principal. It did, however, raise a dilemma for principals: support of the teacher against professional responsibility for the educational program of the child. One principal said,

> I suppose that overall my experience indicates that parents contact the school because they are not comfortable with some aspect of the quality of the teaching. Rightly or wrongly, they believe that the teacher is not doing what is best for their child. In these situations you must be sensitive. That is your professional responsibility, the well being of that child and particularly the nature of the educational program for that child. Also you have at least an equal responsibility to support your staff. So you are really the meat in the sandwich.

Many of the contacts were made because of parental concern about the quality of discipline within the room. One principal cited the case where several parents approached the principal because

> the children were running riot. The teacher seemed to be shouting all of the time and the parent was worried about the quality of the learning that might be going on. . . . I couldn't disagree with their concerns; in fact ,I had to agree with their concerns. I kept thinking to myself that if my own child was in that particular situation, I wouldn't hesitate to move my child, so I ended moving the two children.

In this case the principal indicated that the movement of the children was part of a strategy to relieve, in the short term, parental pressure from the teacher who was already undergoing an intensive professional development program.

Another principal mentioned being contacted by a parent who complained about the disciplinary action taken by himself/herself and the effect it had on his/her son. "The parent phoned because he was concerned with the way I had dealt with a particular situation involving his son." The principal had intervened when the child and another child were taking copies of a poster around the school. It was part of a school process for the children to share their work. The poster had been produced in class and was on a theme from the amusement section of the local Horticultural and Agricultural Show. The principal indicated that

> the students had picked out items particularly related to violence. They depicted razor blades in flesh, knives through heads, and those sort of things. The teacher had allowed them to photocopy it [poster] and the boys took them around to other classes. A teacher from another class came to see me and said "Have you seen this?" That was when I looked at it and I wasn't at all impressed with it.

The principal spoke with the boys about the suitability of the theme and indicated to them that what was appropriate in one situation was not necessarily so in another. After the discussion, the boys retrieved the copies of the poster from the rooms where it was on display. The principal then had

> a chat to the teacher and talked about expectations and her responsibility to monitor the children's work and how the kids had lost face because of what I was forced to do. Miles' Dad phoned next day to say that he was really upset by the way that it had been dealt with. He was upset because Miles was upset. I explained to him exactly what I had done and why I had done it. He wanted to know how a seven year old could know that what was appropriate in one situation and not appropriate in another. I mean they believe what they read so how can you expect them to know about the variations of truth? I said, "You have to start somewhere and if they already knew about violence maybe it was time to start learning about peace. They can start learning what the opposite views are." I don't know that he was convinced. However, that night and the next few days there was a fair bit of media coverage on the TV about the type of show bags available and calls for some to be removed. I did not hear back from him.

In this case the principal indicated that violence could not be condoned and because of that, as principal of the school, was not prepared to negotiate or concede to the parent's concerns.

In the majority of cases, principals negotiated with the parent about the actions that parents wanted to see occur. These were then discussed with the teacher concerned and some compromise actions were determined. This was indicated by the following principal:

> The situation was typical of a number of contacts that I have had over a period of time. That was a concern about the child's performance at the school. The parent initiated that contact by phone. We talked about the problem as it related to a particular teacher. The parent was of the opinion that the problem was more with the teacher than the child. We arranged a time for the parent to come in so that we could sit down and talk about the issue. With a phone contact, it is often difficult to get a real feel for the problem. The parent was invited in, a time was made. We sat down and tried to clearly define what the problem was in the parent's eyes, how the parent perceived the child's performance at school, and tried to get a clear understanding about what the parent's concern with the teacher was. I wanted to be able to initiate some sort of follow-up action from the interview. I guess we first of all defined the problem in terms of the child and the parent, then the teacher. I made some statements about actions that I would take as follow-up. It would involve talking to the teacher, talking to the child and then follow-up contact with them.

It can be seen that the principal initially attempted to look at the problem from the parent's perspective and sought information from the parent about his/her perception of how to solve the issue. This perception and desired resolution was then balanced against possible implications for the teacher, and a compromise solution was sought. This negotiation process was articulated by many principals.

Academic Attainment

Academic attainment was a frequent cause of parents contacting the school. One case recounted by a principal involved parents gathering considerable data prior to their approach to the school:

> On one occasion three or four years ago a couple of parents came to see me about the standard of instruction. I wasn't aware of the problem to any great extent in the early stages. One of the parents undertook a private investigation initially in which he constructed a sort of test and administered it to his son. He then got his sister who was a teacher at another school to administer it to her class and got another teacher to do the same. Because we came out of it reasonably well, he [the parent] didn't go on with it this time. However, one of the other parents did. She came to

> me and complained about the standards. She also went out collecting evidence. What she did was go and speak to principals of other primary schools in the area and also spoke to the deputy principal who is in charge of Maths at the high school. . . . She was trying to prove that our school was inadequate in the way that it did the course. We had a fairly patchy performance in that area as the course was new. Some of the classes were excellent and others weren't as good. In at least one instance, one teacher was below standard. Her general argument was that Maths was below standard here. She managed to trap the deputy principal of the high school into expressing an opinion that children here were behind the rest of the district students in terms of maths coverage when they got to high school. So that presented a many-sided problem to deal with.

Hidden within the contact was a myriad of issues; but because of the inference about standards which reflected poorly on the professional competence of the teachers, the school perceived itself to be under attack and was most concerned to resolve the issue. A review of past and current results and a review of course content and continuity were undertaken. The results of these reviews led to changes being made in the program. The principal acknowledged that

> we felt very threatened and pretty angry over the issue. Even with our work, we never ever satisfied the parent concerned. I find it difficult to understand all of her motives in doing it. I don't think that she was entirely concerned with standards; there was an element of power in the thing as well. We needed to make sure that it wasn't just an exercise of upstaging the parent's personal drives. She was certainly very skilled in the way that she pursued the matter. A fair bit of evidence was presented which was difficult to handle.

This particular case was seen as one where it was not possible to resolve the issue by negotiation. Nevertheless, negotiation seemed to be the strategy favoured by principals for conflict resolution. One indicated this when saying, "I will negotiate provided I am not compromising my beliefs. . . . I will argue the case, but I will always leave my way open for us to both feel good about it . The central issues mostly boil down to matters of equity, human rights, and social justice." All principals could cite areas where they would not negotiate. The common aspects were the safety of children, requests for processes known educationally undesirable, corporal punishment, and matters of human rights and social justice.

Class Allocation

The allocation of children to a particular class was closely scrutinized by parents, and they frequently approached the school when they were not happy with the result. One principal recounted a time when

> a group of parents came to see me to make an appointment to discuss the problems they had with regard to the placement of their children in one particular class. The school had to form another class. It was my intention to take five kids who were placed in another junior primary class and move them into the class that was being formed. The parents wanted an opportunity to talk about that. It gave me a chance to reflect on the letter that I had sent to them saying that due to the following reasons it was envisaged that their children would be moved from one class into another. So after the contact with the first parent, a meeting time was organized with the four other parents as well. A group of five parents came along to talk about the reasons why and also to voice their concerns about the move. Certainly when the meeting started there was quite a bit of anger displayed by the parents and it was mainly displayed for two reasons. One was that they felt they were not communicated with well enough as to the reasons for the movement of their children. The second was that they felt that their children would be disadvantaged if they were to moved to another class. The first task that I had was to talk through that anger. It had to come out so that we could start rationally looking at the negatives and positives of the proposed movement of the children to a new area or for them to remain behind in the class. . . . It was surprising, because they were the ones to initially sow the seed in my mind to take those students out of the class when I created the new class. They were the five reception students in with 18 year two's. Once we had talked through all of those issues, yes I did agree that communication could have been better in regard to giving them news of the idea that they could be moved to a new class. I had sent them a letter asking for their feedback; it was almost a circular. It could have been better.

It can be seen that the principal was open to the parents and talked through the issues. Part of the negotiation of the solution was the admission of fault by the principal. On reflection about the concerns of the parents, the principal realized that "there was not anything to be gained by getting them off side by moving the kids. There were a lot more positive things to be gained by not moving them. The final decision after I had discussed it with the teachers afterwards was to leave the kids where they were." Another principal indicated that experience had shown that class allocation is a potential problem, so parents are invited to contact the school with any concerns they have before the process is finalized.

> By manipulating the classroom structures here in the last couple of years, we have been able to minimize the parental pressures on teachers. In about November of each year, I put out an invitation to parents to come and see me if they have, well

> the way that I put it to them is, if they have any concerns about the placement the following year. I encourage them to tell me about the conditions under which their child will work the best in the following year. This is an attempt to take some of the pressure off teachers, because some of the parents will use the time to say, "I don't want teacher X or Y." However, I guess that is what I am attempting to do, pick up any vibes that parents have against a particular teacher. If you insist on placing that child with that teacher, it virtually ensures that there will be some pressure during the year. Even though the school is getting smaller, we have still been able to find alternatives.

This pro-active approach was successful and the principal indicated that the staff endorsed the process. It enabled parents to have a say in an area that was very sensitive and at the same time protected teachers from possible antagonistic parents.

Student Behavior

Problems caused by the behavior of a child at school or the behavior of other children towards a child had an effect on the total family. It could cause the child to be miserable and unhappy, and those around the child frequently wondered at the cause. Principals saw it as a problem, because as one indicated, " I have never had a parent contact me when his/her child is really happy at school." One principal encapsulated the feelings of many and their concern with solving any problems in this area before the ripple effect had time to take place:

> From a parent's point of view, I guess if the child is really unhappy at school, doesn't want to come to school, cries in the mornings, that is serious and indicates a range of problems. You have a very concerned, frustrated parent wondering if it is them or the school that is the root cause. For the teacher it could indicate that he/she is doing something that is creating the effect. I would view a situation like that with extreme concern. You have an unhappy child, an unhappy parent, and an unhappy teacher. Also it usually happens when there are a lot of other parents and kids around and in turn it affects them as well. Misery at the classroom door is not good publicity.

Principals are very sensitive to student morale and as indicated above attempt to find the root cause of student unhappiness. Parents were quick to discuss their concerns about an unhappy child with others and acknowledged that there was, in the words of one parent, "a fair bit of talk over the back yard fence about various teachers." Principals saw that it was prudent to solve problems in this area before the "gossip" ran rampant. Irrespective of the gossip, principals also acknowledged the educational need to solve such problems. Many of the problems in this area of student happiness were seen to be associated with peer interactions. Principals had numerous theories about the sex and age grouping of children when this was likely to be most prevalent.

One case cited by a principal involved the parent making initial contact with the Superintendent:

> A parent who has three children at the school recently moved them here from another school. She was under some pressure to move them because she lived near here and hence had no rights to use the bus for transport to the other school. About a month after she enrolled them, she wrote to the Superintendent of Schools saying that her daughter (there are two boys and a girl) was desperately unhappy at the school. She stated that she had been crying every morning, refusing to go to school and therefore she wanted to return the child to the original school even though it would cause her inconvenience with children in two schools. The Superintendent wrote back and said no. She got in contact with him again, and then he got in contact with me to find out what was going on. We had no idea that the child was unhappy. She appeared to be a pretty well-adjusted little kid. We made subtle inquiries about how she was getting on, and she seemed to be quite happy. But the mother was convinced that she wasn't. Eventually the Superintendent persuaded the mother to come and see me, which she did and which I wished she had done right at the beginning. She was a little bit aggressive initially, but we talked about the problem. She told me that the child was very unhappy at school, had made no friends and was being teased by some of the older girls. Her schooling was going backwards and her reading as well. I then said to the mother that I felt that we could probably do something about that and that taking her out of the school would be a hassle on a whole lot of grounds, when it was possible that we could do something to fix the situation up. I then got the child into the room with the mother and as gently as possible asked how she was getting on. She said she was unhappy mainly because she was being teased about her appearance by three older girls. I told the mother that I would see the child's classroom teacher and talk to him about it, that I would talk to the girls that were teasing her child and that we would monitor the situation. I also said that I would ring her back in two weeks' time on the Friday, so that it was quite clear in her mind. I also suggested that the child would probably take cues from her and would she do her best to be as encouraging and supportive about the school as possible so the little girl wasn't getting the message that Mum didn't like the school either. She agreed and left quite happy. I then saw the three older girls who had been allegedly teasing the child, but I didn't confront them about teasing her. I had some school photographs and I asked whether they knew her. "Aw yeah," they did. Rather than berating them for teasing her I said that she was unhappy at school and that she would probably appreciate some attention from some older girls. Could they go out of their way to play with her a bit, even just to say hello to her, just to keep an eye on her, and also to let me know whether she was playing with other children? . . . I got very regular reports from the three girls, and last Friday I rang up the mother. She said that except for one day, the girl hasn't cried once before going to school. I feel that the problem has been basically solved.

The actions taken by this principal were indicative of those taken by others. Resolution of these problems required sensitivity, an understanding of children's interaction patterns, and the intuitive practice of a good psychologist.

External Factors

Many principals cited examples of parents contacting the school when the problem that initiated the contact was not really a school matter. Often, as one principal said,

> after 35 to 40 minutes of basically listening and eliciting further information, you can discover that the presented story is not really what is at the bottom of the contact. There are a whole range of underlying problems, many from the home situation or social in nature, but you need that information to really clarify what the issues are for you as the principal to assist in what steps you need to take.

In these cases, parents were seen to approach the school for two reasons: firstly to have somebody to talk to, and secondly to assure the school that it was not the fault of the child if his/her work was suffering. One principal said:

> I seem to get a lot of parent contact when there is a marriage or household break up, some custody battle, or Department of Community Welfare with a foster child placement problem. Basically that is the sort of thing I bump into. . . . Alternatively, some of the contacts are when Dad has shot through up to the Territory and Mum wants to tell us about it. They want to let us know that their child is not a failure if the father's departure is affecting their work; in other words it is not the child's fault. I suppose many of them are looking for counselling and don't know where to go. We are available and so they come up here. I try to make them aware of the community counselling facilities, COPE, churches, and all of those places.

Many of the principals saw it as part of their role to listen and then advise the parents where to seek appropriate help. One stated that it was part of modelling and being congruent with the caring aspects espoused within his/her school mission statement. These principals had an extensive knowledge of other government agencies and support groups. One indicated that

> something like 65% of our families are single parent families, so they haven't got another adult to talk about issues. Many of them are unskilled in their parenting aspects, so they really are in difficulties anyway. So I let them talk it out and I then take to our health services counseling center. There is always someone available there to support them or do what is appropriate.

Principals consistently spoke of the community support services that they had to know of and their need to access them. They saw it as part of their service role and acknowledged that the need correlated with the socio-economic areas in which the school was located.

There was one major type of problem where listening to the concern and the anger placation process was not seen to be effective. This occurred when, according to one principal,

> parents come to the school because we have been legally required to inform Department of Community Welfare about their child being abused in some way. They rarely buy the attending conciliatory listening approach I talked about earlier. They are often quite violent, verbally and sometimes physically. They perceive that the school is interfering in the life of the family. It has put the Welfare onto them and is probing into their family life. They believe that the school has no right to do that, but the school has no choice.

These cases were seen to be nonresolvable, and the protection of personnel from the often violent physical displays of anger was a real concern to the principals who discussed this issue.

Summary

Principals reported that parents contacted the school by telephone or visited in person when they had concerns about some aspect of the performance of their child's teacher, when social or behavioral problems being experienced by a child, when they perceived a lack of academic progress, when they were concerned about the allocation of a child to a class, or for factors outside of the domain of the school.

In many cases, parents contacting the school were angry and principals indicated that it was necessary to first deal with this anger. Dealing with the complaint or concern required good listening skills and an ability to negotiate and compromise within prescribed boundaries. Many principals indicated that they would not compromise if it meant the resultant actions were not in the best interest of the child or if the actions requested were not sound educational practice.

Teacher performance was frequently of concern to parents, and in most cases this was quickly resolved. Principals nevertheless indicated that negotiation in this area could produce a dilemma between support for the teacher as against professional responsibility for the child concerned.

Concerns about the level of attainment of a child were frequently mentioned by principals, and one principal cited a case where a parent gathered considerable evidence prior to visiting the school. This in turn generated a review of practice at the school concerned, but it was difficult for staff to handle as many felt threatened by the actions of the parent.

The allocation of children to individual classes was a sensitive issue and parents watched the process with a degree of concern. One principal mentioned that because of this, parents were given the chance to react to potential class lists before they were finalized.

Many of the parent contacts were initiated because of a situation outside of the school's control. In most of these contacts, the principals provided a friendly ear and offered suggestions as to the appropriate avenues for the parent to follow. In some cases, the parents approaching the school were very angry because of the actions of school personnel in reporting child abuse cases to the Department of Community Welfare. These parents were frequently very hostile about the interference of the school personnel in their family situation. However, the school personnel had no other option.

Parental Interventions: Superintendents' Perceptions

Most superintendents interviewed indicated that by and large parents contacted them about the performance of the principal. This could relate to the total job performance of the principal or the principal's reaction and response to an initial approach by a parent. In the latter case, parents felt that they had not been heard, were not happy with the strategies proposed by the school to resolve the initial concern, or they had perceptions that the school had not followed through with the actions agreed upon. In many situations superintendents indicated that the approach from a parent to the superintendent was a result of discussions between the classroom teacher and the parents not being settled. Subsequent parental approach to the principal has also led to non-resolution of the concerns, so the parents then contacted the superintendent. One superintendent reinforced this scenario when offering comments about contact by parents. The superintendent said

> The parents believed that a wrong decision was taken in a classroom in relation to their child. Not only did they believe that a wrong decision was taken, but the principal was not prepared to have an open discussion about that decision. So the parents contacted me.

Superintendents acknowledged that principals wanted to protect teachers, but it was seen that this could not be at the expense of rejecting parental approaches.

When speaking about parental contact because of principal competence, a superintendent said, "I was contacted by phone because a parent had a concern about the way in which the principal of the school was administering the school." Sometimes action was because of group concern, and one superintendent indicated that "a group organized a very sophisticated approach whereby every half hour on the half hour one of them would telephone me. Through the whole day I would have had eight or nine phone calls."

Most parents preferred to use the telephone for the initial contact, and only a few then followed up with a letter about the issue. Complaints about the performance of a principal ranged from the allocation of children to a class; policy decisions made about curriculum offerings, camps and excursions, sporting activities, and visiting performers; administration of funds and canteen management; the discipline policy of a school; and principal expectations about teacher performance. Superintendents indicated that they usually did not know what the subject of a complaint would be when they picked up the telephone.

A Comparison of Perceptions

Apart from concerns about children's safety, children's medical condition, and parent concern about a child's academic attainment, all other parental interventions were prompted by the morale or happiness of a child. Parents indicated that there were three crucial components of a child's school life that affected the happiness of the child. They were the child's social interactions with peers, the nature of the relationship between the child and the teacher, and the degree of academic success experienced by the child.

Principals perceived that parents contacted the teacher or them when concerned about the class to which a child had been allocated, when the academic progress of the child was not meeting the parents' expectations, when the parents were concerned about a social or behavioral problem associated with their child, when parents have a concern with the approach of an individual teacher, or when parents had nobody else to talk with about a problem they were facing in their own lives. The nature of the child's social interaction and state of happiness was the basis for the approach in three of these categories. This was especially so with concerns about class allocation. These concerns were based on perceptions of teacher competence or the fact that a child would be split from a friendship group. Both factors were seen to affect the social interaction patterns of the child.

Superintendents were of the opinion that parents contacted them because of a concern for their child or because of their concern about the ability of the principal. In the first case, the concern had in most cases initially led them to the school; but failure of the school personnel to satisfy these concerns prompted the parents to contact the superintendent, seeking assistance in resolving the problem. In the latter case, superintendents saw that they were the natural person for the parents to contact. The contacts about principal competence ranged over a number of issues and there was no perception by superintendents of a standard pattern.

Principals' Responses to Parental Interventions

All principals indicated that they were concerned when a parent approached the school and all thought that they were obliging to parents and took reasonable steps to solve the problem or resolve the issue that prompted parents to contact them. One principal indicated that since arriving at the school at the beginning of the school year, measures had been taken to clarify to the parents the steps they could take if they had a concern with any aspect of the school's operation. This principal said,

> If parents bring a concern or issue, then it will be listened to, thoroughly examined, and action will occur.
>
> Interviewer What are the entry points that you have outlined to the parents?
>
> Well, it really depends on the concern. If there are concerns of a minor nature in relation to a child in a class, then it should really be done between the parent and the teacher concerned. If it is something regarding a school policy and one that they disagree with, then they can look at two possible avenues. The first avenue is the School Council. Parents can contact a member as agent to raise the issue at a School Council meeting. Parents can also contact the Chairperson of the Council and arrange to present it at a Council meeting. They can attend any Council meeting, but prior arrangement is needed for an agenda item. If they don't feel that they have satisfaction when speaking to a teacher then the logical extension is to see the principal. If parents then feel that the principal hasn't followed through with the issues they have raised, then they can provide that information to the Area Office and the Superintendent.

The majority of principals perceived that they were readily available for parent contact and encouraged parents to contact them when concerned about any issue connected with the school and its operation.

Principals were asked during the interviews whether they had a standard pattern or mental grid that guided their actions when responding to parent concerns. The first thing mentioned by many principals was their preference for face-to face-contact. As one principal said, "I try to get the parent to come and talk to me because I prefer face-to-face contact. There are tremendous benefits in a two-way set up. If you can show that you are quite willing to go and talk to them, it indicates your willingness to listen and take action."

Once the contact had been initiated, most principals saw that the first requirement was to listen very carefully to the parent. In many cases the parent had a fair degree of anger when approaching the school, so it was necessary to deal initially with this anger. One principal said, "It can be very emotional to start with, and you must sit there and soak all of that anger up for as long as it takes the parent to get rational. You have to deal with the feelings first before the problem." Dealing with the anger was seen as critical if a resolution to the problem was to occur. To bolster their case, many parents coupled their anger with threats of action to higher authority or the threat of removal of their children from the school. One principal indicated that most parents

> leave a problem until they are fairly angry, so it is usually not a matter of academic discussion of school policies, etc. Many times the approach is accompanied by a threat to withdraw the children from the school, or "I will take this further to the Education Department," attempting to hit me over the head with a stick as it were. I guess the first task is to get the anger to come out and to listen and try to not be too defensive about things. Many times what they are saying to me is fair; it is just the manner in which it is delivered that is not always very palatable.

Following the placation of the anger by active listening, it was necessary to begin to clarify the issue. Many principals mentioned that, "My first question to them is have they spoken to the teacher about the matter, because if not they need to do so because that teacher has the right to know about their concern." However while listening to the parent negotiation commences about how the parent would like to see the issue resolved. As one principal said, "In a sense you negotiate with them what steps you will take, at the same time maintaining your professionalism and protecting the teacher."

One principal mentioned that the notes taken during the interview with the parent "are read back to them and I ask if that is OK. It is so both of us have a clear understanding of what the action I am going to take, or what she is going to take, or what both of us are going to take. I always ensure that every one knows what is going on." Having gauged the parent's expectations, follow-up action is promised and further investigation is usually undertaken. The first follow up step taken usually involves talking to the teacher concerned. A principal indicated this when saying,

> I mean if you are talking about both the teacher and the parent being aware of what the issues are, then you need to talk to the teacher. You need to be quite open and honest about what the parent has been saying and you go through a similar process with the teacher and listen to what they have to say about the child and the problem and what they would propose. Hopefully, when you have the whole picture you can then make constructive suggestions about alternative options for resolution.

However, some principals mentioned that the discussion with the teacher led to a dilemma for the principal, because as one mentioned, "I have found out from experience that both cases sound equally convincing. When that is so I find it a bit tricky. I feel a basic responsibility to support my staff, but I have also a responsibility for children and I guess that is the bottom line."

Careful analysis of the viewpoints following further investigation usually indicate the options available. These are communicated to both parties and the process for resolution agreed upon. Follow-up at a later date was seen as important, and many a principal wrote " a reminder to myself at some forward date in my diary." One principal indicated:

> When you have negotiated a series of steps then follow-up needs to occur to check that it is happening. It is also support for the teacher and the follow-up can take a lot of different forms, depending on the severity of the initial problem.

Summary

Principals saw that rapid attention to parent interventions was essential. Some principals took steps to outline to parents what avenues were open to them if they wished to raise a concern about some aspect of the school's operation. When initially contacted, many principals asked if the parent had spoken to the teacher. If they had not, they were frequently requested to do so. If they had and were still concerned, the principals were then most willing to listen to the parent.

Irrespective of the concern, many parents displayed anger in their initial approach to the school. All principals saw that it was necessary to first deal with this anger. Some mentioned that the greater the anger, the more wearing the process was for the principal.

After listening to the parents and dealing with the anger principals frequently found that the cause of the problem was not directly attributable to the school. When this was the case, parents were advised of the steps that they could take to alleviate their concerns. If the problem was attributable to the school, most principals said they would negotiate with the parents about how they would like to see the problem resolved. All agreed that with the proviso offered by one, who said, "I will negotiate provided I don't compromise my beliefs."

Following the meeting with the parents, discussion with the appropriate school personnel occurred. During this process, principals informed the teacher of the parent's concerns and sought discrepancies between the two parties' perceptions of the problem. When a range of possible strategies were available for the resolution of the difficulty, and one principal indicated that "nine times out of ten there is room to manoeuvre," both parties were then informed and the agreed solution was put into action. All principals agreed that subsequent follow-up was necessary to ensure that the solution to the problem remained effective. Most have personal mechanisms for re-establishing contact with the parent.

Superintendents' Responses to Parental Interventions

Superintendents were consistent in the manner in which they responded to parent concerns. There was a common perception that as superintendents they provided gateways to the system for parents and as such they were sensitive to parent contact. One superintendent summarized this by saying, "My first approach is to always remind myself that I am here to give a service and so I try always to be cordial, to be a good listener, to indicate that the person's concern is being received sincerely, courteously." Superintendents acknowledged that this was frequently difficult, as many of the contacts were associated with a high degree of emotion and anger. At the start of the conversation, each superintendent indicated that, he/she made certain that he/she had names, locations, and times. One superintendent said that the identification of the locations were important because

> I suppose one of the first things that comes into mind then is a picture of the school. There is an expectation that this is going to be a positive call or the possibility of a

> major complaint. That is also important, because I know the principal concerned and I know my relations with that person. I know whether I can solve the problem about to be raised by negotiation or discussion, or how rational the principal is going to be should it be a problem.

Most superintendents would agree with the superintendent who said, "I listen and probe but make no comment for upwards of thirty or forty minutes, maybe a bit more. Then I keep on asking, 'Is there anything else that you want to raise? Is there more?' Get it all out straight away." Careful listening and probing were considered essential to determine the underlying motivation for the call and the seriousness of the complaint. A superintendent said,

> I find that if I believe that the initial factor that fired the parent up to contact the office is minor, then they will have added everything that they can think of and every thing that the neighbors can think of in relation to the performance of the person concerned.

However, one superintendent acknowledged that if the person "is angry and their main reason in ringing is to vent their frustration and anger, then invariably on such occasions one finds it very hard to be purposeful, steering the discussion to some kind of definite action." Most superintendents thought that parents should first contact the principal about a concern and were sensitive to direct contact from parents about an issue. One of the first things that superintendents asks

> the person ringing is if he/she have been to the school about the issue? Have you been to see the teacher? Did you get satisfaction there? If not, did you approach the principal? If you haven't done that, then I suggest you go back before coming in to see me.

Several superintendents indicated that if the parents were uncomfortable about approaching the school, then they would assist them. One said,

> I offer to make the approach on their behalf and suggest to the school that the teacher, deputy, or principal then contact the parent. If they are still uncomfortable with that, then I will deal with the school directly on their behalf, because parents do have rights and there are some times when those rights can be abused by the system's point of view.

The offer to follow up a concern on behalf of the parent at the school level appeared to be prompted by the perception that the first point of contact should be at the school and that the superintendent was then available to assist with problem rectification when this avenue was exhausted. One superintendent summarized this when saying,

> I suppose my general approach is to try and ascertain what the problem is and who really owns that problem. When I say "own" I mean who in the first instance ought to deal with it. Always without exception I come to the conclusion that the person is the principal of the school. It is only when I perceive that there is some irreconcilable problem between the complainant and the principal that I see it is my problem.

Nevertheless, all superintendents were sensitive to ensuring that actions occurred as a result of parents approaching them. One indicated,

> Two things have to happen when a complaint is lodged. First, the person lodging the complaint has got to feel listened to and at least understood--not necessarily agreed with, but listened to and understood. Then the second thing that has to happen is some sort of action takes place as a result of that complaint.

This reiterated the common concern of all the superintendents: parents being listened to and actions being seen to result from the approach. There was a sense of immediacy associated with parent concerns. Many superintendents indicated that they phoned the school to advise them of the complaint and the actions they had taken, and at the same time indicated what might be appropriate actions for school personnel to follow. This advice reinforced to principals the requirement for them to handle the issue. This was demonstrated by the superintendent who said,

> I will more often than not ring the principal and say I have had this phone call, this is what I have said, and negotiate with the principal that there will be some kind of action. I often say to the principal, "What would you like to do? Would you like to contact the parent, do you want me to telephone the parent and say that I have rung you and you ask that the parent come in to the school?"

Given this approach from the superintendent, most principals indicate that they will resolve the concerns of the parent.

Where superintendents felt it was necessary for them to be involved with the concern as soon as the parent contact was made, the same sense of immediacy was associated with rectification of the problem. One superintendent said, " I try to follow up on the day that the complaint comes to hand by visiting the household that evening where possible."

Many of the superintendents indicated that they were quite prepared to visit the home of the person complaining and that they preferred face-to-face contact.

Most superintendents indicated that they negotiated with the persons involved and sought information as to what the various parties wished to have happen. One superintendent said that active listening enabled him/her to personally sum up the issues involved and to get an impression of when to facilitate the generation of a solution. One superintendent said, "I normally try to involve the person who is more easily able to see a resolution." When there was agreement from all involved, the superintendents summarized the actions that would be undertaken by all parties and most then followed up with written confirmation of these actions.

One superintendent indicated a personal approach to future follow-up with parents. This involved fixing two dates in a personal diary, "where I record the name, telephone number, and the issue. The first date is usually about a month after resolution. If that call is positive and things are going OK, it is then three to four months, although this depends on the time of the year." Parents were often surprised at receiving the first call but reacted positively to it, expressing their appreciation to the superintendent for calling. This superintendent indicated that the follow-up would be mentioned by the parent to other parents and so the office reputation about approachability was enhanced. This strategy reinforced the importance all superintendents placed on parents seeing that their complaint was met with concern and that actions occurred as a result of their contact with the superintendent.

A Comparison of Responses

Principals and superintendents indicated that most contacts at the school level and with the superintendent were initiated by telephone. The majority of principals and superintendents attempted to arrange a face-to-face meeting to follow the initial contact and to there resolve the problem. Many were quite willing to meet the parents at their home or a location they wished to nominate. Principals and superintendents thought that rapid responses were essential, with superintendents indicating that they attempted to follow up on a call that day if at all humanly possible. The maximum time they allowed to elapse would be a week. The passage of a week would be an exception rather than the rule.

When parents telephoned superintendents, all requested the name, address, and telephone number of the person making the complaint. They indicated that this was done to give some proof of genuineness on the part of the parent. The name and address of the parent was treated as confidential information if the parent so desired.

When approached by parents, principals tended to ask if the parents had spoken with the classroom teacher about an issue; superintendents asked the parents if they had made contact with the school. If the parents had not done so, most superintendents advised them to contact the school and if they were not happy with the outcome to contact them again. If a parent was reluctant to do this, many of the superintendents indicated that they were prepared to contact the school on behalf of the parent or with the parent. In many cases, a superintendent would organize and chair a joint meeting between the school personnel involved and the parents This was a reflection of the superintendents' sensitivity to parental interventions. It also reflected the perception of many of the superintendents that they were the gateways to the school system for parents and that parent rights were sometimes ignored by schools. Many superintendents saw themselves as a service agency for parents. In cases where the parents took the advice of the superintendent and were willing to contact the school, the superintendent most often telephoned the school and advised the principal of his/her actions. He/she frequently asked the principal if he/she was prepared to handle the problem or whether the principal wished that the superintendent to remain involved. Superintendents indicated that principals usually elected to handle the issue themselves.

Principals and superintendents spoke of the anger and hostility that were frequently present when parent contact was made. All said that it was necessary to deal with this anger before attempting to seek solutions for the problem or issue. Most principals and all superintendents said that apart from trivial complaints, they attempted to find out what the complainant wanted to have happen. After listening to the parents, principals and superintendents then spoke with the second party to the dispute as part of their process of checking perceptions and looking for common ground. This aspect of the problem resolution sometimes raised a dilemma for principals. They saw a duty to support and protect their staff, but at the same time they acknowledged a professional responsibility for the children in their care. Once common ground had been found principals and superintendents arranged a meeting or telephone the parties to discuss the solution and strategies that would be followed to ensure that the solution was implemented. All principals and superintendents had some personal process for ensuring follow-up occurred with the parents who had initiated the complaint. Irrespective of the perceptions of principals and superintendents, only fifty percent of the interviewed parents who had contacted a school with a concern were satisfied with the outcomes.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents an overview of the study, a summary and discussion of the major findings and a number of practical and research implications of the study.

Overview of the Study

This study was conducted to probe the factors associated with the effectiveness of schools and of principals, the interrelationships between school effectiveness and principal effectiveness, and the interventions that parents make at a school or with a superintendent of schools when they perceive a school is not achieving the levels of effectiveness they have set for it. A review of the literature and a series of meetings using the nominal group technique that were held with principals served as bases for the development of questionnaires for parents and principals within one administrative area of the South Australian Education Department and for superintendents from the entire state of South Australia. Thirty-two parents, thirteen principals and eight superintendents participated in follow-up interviews; these permitted important findings to be further examined.

Numerical data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques; frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, varimax factor analysis, Pearson correlation coefficients, cross tabulations and linear regression analysis. Interview data and open-ended questionnaire responses provided valuable additional information about important dimensions of effectiveness and ineffectiveness and about interventions made by parents. Content analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses was supplemented with detailed recording, and where appropriate, quotation of individual interview responses.

School Effectiveness: Comparison of Perspectives

Introduction

This section reviews the similarities and differences between the perspectives of parents, principals and superintendents on factors associated with school effectiveness. Each group of respondents was asked to rate the importance of each item, of a 79-item questionnaire on a four-point scale, for principal effectiveness or school effectiveness, and to rate the overall effectiveness of the principal and the school. The forty most important items identified by parents and principals as being descriptive of an effective school were used in a varimax factor analysis to determine a seven factors solution for the underlying factors that describe school effectiveness. The seven factors were named Principal as Nexus, Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff, Student Centeredness, Facilities and Financial Management, Goal Emphasis, Parental Support, and Academic Program Focus.

Comparison of Perceptions on School Effectiveness Factors

Principal as Nexus

The factor *Principal as Nexus* contained fifteen items which focussed on the activities of effective principals. The principal was seen as the connecting link between and among staff, students, and the parent community. The connection however, was not a passive conduit for ideas, actions, or activities to flow through. It required purposeful interventions by the principal. As the nexus the principal acts as the concrete that holds the structure of the school in its required form.

For parent respondents to the effectiveness questionnaire this factor had the highest mean score among the seven factor means. For principals the *Principal as Nexus* factor had the third-highest mean score while for superintendents it had the fifth-highest mean score. For individual items within this factor parents indicated that the highest levels of effectiveness were associated with principals' response to change while superintendents rated the highest the principal's recognition of the unique nature of the school community. Principals, though expressing substantial agreement with superintendents on recognition of the unique nature of the school community, gave highest rating to the item within this factor that identified two-way channels of communication with all staff.

During interviews all groups identified the nexus role of the principal as important. The abilities of the principal associated with different aspects of this factor were seen to be crucial in determining the overall effectiveness of the principal and of the school. A fundamental skill was seen to be the communication ability of the principal. This was supported by the questionnaire responses where both parents and principals rated the principal's two-way channels of communication with all staff as the most important factor for school effectiveness. The principal's two-way channels of communication with parents was rated as the fourth most important item for school effectiveness by both parents and principals, while principal two-way channels of communication with students, was ranked the eleventh most important item for school effectiveness by both parents and principals.

Parents interviewed gave great emphasis to the principal's communication ability and linked it with the approachability of the principal. Principals saw that their communication ability was central to the development of a team approach that was necessary for goal achievement while superintendents thought that interpersonal skills were important base skills needed before performance of other aspects of a principal's role could proceed effectively. Superintendents indicated that an important component of the communication process was the ability of the principal to carefully listen to other people without becoming defensive and this linked with parent perceptions of principal approachability. Superintendents thought that good listening skills and non-defensiveness of principals when confronted with ideas or opinions differing from their own both depended on a sound self-concept and a genuine liking of people. While superintendents were of the opinion that interpersonal skills could be learned, they thought that significantly improving the interpersonal skill level of a principal was very difficult.

Parent responses to the questionnaire indicated that principals were highly effective in keeping up to date with new teaching methods (effectiveness mean of 4.12 on the five-point scale used) and in their preparedness to learn new ideas and approaches (effectiveness mean of 4.13 on the five-point scale used); these two aspects were ranked tenth and twelfth by parents in overall importance for school effectiveness. Principal responses to the questionnaire showed 72% rated themselves highly effective or extremely effective in their preparedness to learn new ideas and methods and 70% rated themselves highly effective or extremely effective in their ability to keep up with new teaching methods. Principal modelling to staff of a willingness to learn was seen as an essential requirement for maintaining high expectations for all staff. Principals and superintendents thought that demonstrated personal learning enabled principals to be more persuasive in articulating their high expectations of all staff and assisted principals in the operation of an effective staff supervision program. Trust level between the principal/deputy principal and other staff members was seen to be an important component of an effective supervisory program and 81% of principals thought that they were highly effective or extremely effective in generating this trust. Within this factor *Principal as Nexus*, the level of trust showed the largest polarization of responses from superintendents, of whom 40% rated principals as not effective or slightly effective on this item and between 45% and 46% of superintendents rated them as highly effective or extremely effective. Superintendents in the interviews stressed that the trust levels were indicative of the climate within the school and the trust between staff and the principal enhanced a supportive supervision program.

All superintendents saw a supervision program for all staff as essential. It assisted with the achievement of school goals and with the personal development of all staff. Most principals supported this view. Though supporting the need for a supervision program principals indicated that improving the work of staff members was their least effective activity. Another essential component of a supervisory program, providing feedback to staff members, was principals' fourth least effective item in the 40 effectiveness items responses. Supervision was seen to give the principal a high profile within the classrooms, the primary domain of the teachers and students, and helped reinforce the high expectations principals have of all people within the school. Parents frequently commented that the involvement and vitality of the principal in activities around the school served to provide a powerful role model for the rest of the staff and had a positive affect on the staff.

Parents, principals and superintendents stressed as important the personal interaction style of the principal when spanning the boundaries of the school. Principals were seen to be role models for schools in general and were responsible for carrying the articulation of the vision of schools across the school boundary. Many judgements about the school and the education system were based on people's perceptions of these interactions. Parents were most sensitive to invisible barriers around a school and commented warmly about principals with the ability to project openness and make themselves and the school approachable.

Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff

The nine items within the factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* are associated with the staff improving and maintaining their technical competence, and jointly working towards the attainment of the goals of the school.

At least 53% of parents and 52% of principals rated as highly effective or extremely effective staff performance on all of the items within this factor. The highest mean (4.12) for parent responses was staff keeping up to date with new teaching methods. The highest mean calculated from the principal responses in this factor was 3.92 for the item concerned with teachers being engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school. Superintendents were unanimous in declaring that teacher quality continues to improve but saw that ongoing professional development for all employees remained critical for the maintenance and continuing improvement of teacher quality. All constituents saw that it was a principal's responsibility to engender staff commitment to their personal learning even though all teachers should see this as an ongoing professional obligation. The provision of time for professional development to occur was seen as critical by each respondent group. Principals and superintendents consistently spoke of the dual strands of staff development programs. Both the personal growth aspect and the school-focussed component were considered equally important. Failure of teachers to acknowledge the need to work on school-focussed change was seen to be counter-productive to the development of a school team and hence inhibited the attainment of school goals.

Superintendents saw that staff commitment increased when there was a common agreed purpose for the school. This common purpose was achieved through cooperative decision-making processes. Superintendents favored a principal management style which encouraged joint control of and responsibility for many of the activities within the school. Teacher participation in the management of matters external to their classrooms created a dilemma for many principals. Principals saw a tension between teacher participation and principal responsibility for activities within the school and hence sought to control many activities. All constituents saw a link between teacher participation in decision making for curriculum and management of aspects of the school and overall teacher job satisfaction. Principals commented on the necessity for giving cognizance to the development of a participatory management style.

Parents saw a link between teacher commitment and the principal's praise and recognition of teachers. They likened it to the way an effective teacher worked with a class of students. Teacher morale was considered important by parents because "happy teachers produce happy kids." Parents were warm in their praise of teachers seen to be committed to their work and to the children in their care. They readily acknowledged the positive influence these teachers had on their children. Lack of teacher commitment to the school and their work was seen by parents to reflect poorly on the abilities of the principal.

Student Centeredness

The factor *Student Centeredness* contained six items and these were associated with reporting student progress and attainment, student satisfaction, student morale and student behavior management.

The highest effectiveness mean score for items within this factor was found in parent and principal responses to item 19--student progress and attainment as reported to parents--with values of 3.98 and 4.06 respectively on the five point scale used. However, item 18--monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students--had the lowest mean value within this factor from all three respondent groups. Superintendents rated only 5.3% of the schools as extremely effective in this area and this was their lowest percentage for any of the 40 items used.

Student morale was a concern to all groups. Even though superintendents had identified one third of their schools as ineffective schools, only 19% of schools were rated not effective or slightly effective on student morale. More than 61% of parents and of principals thought that student satisfaction and student morale were highly effective or extremely effective. Based on parent responses to the questionnaire on importance ratings for school effectiveness, high student morale received the third highest mean value. Student morale was of high importance to parents, and schools were judged as highly effective in generating this morale.

During interviews, student satisfaction and morale were usually equated with student happiness and were commented on by all people interviewed. Parents identified three aspects they considered important: willingness of the child to go to school, good social relationships for the child at the school, and knowledge that the child was physically safe and secure. Reduction in the level of any of these factors quickly energized a parent to contact the school or a superintendent. Parents saw that student willingness to go to school was a reflection of the relationships between the child's teacher and the child. All parents wanted the best possible teacher for their child and if problems existed between the teacher and the child, they wished to be able to approach the school and resolve the issue. Approachability of people within a school was a major concern for parents and they were warm in their praise of teachers and principals who listened to their concerns and acted to resolve those issues. Superintendents indicated that many of the contacts they received at the district office were because of the non-resolution of conflicts between children and individual teachers.

Superintendents expressed concern during the interviews about the nature of the relationships between teacher and child. They acknowledged that the rights of children had changed during the last decade and it was essential that relationships within a classroom reflected these changes. They were of the opinion that teachers who had not changed their teaching style and who were not negotiating with children about classroom activities and rules were more frequently associated with parent complaints. Superintendents were emphatic that principals needed to work with teachers to determine the appropriate type of relationships that should exist between teachers and children. If this were not done it was possible that the student behavior management program of a school could reflect a negative, policing approach. When mentioning school discipline parents wanted the rules to be fair to all and though many were not able to explain what "fair" meant, they thought that the discipline within a classroom was really the teacher's philosophy in action. Many parents thought that the school ethos on discipline was generated primarily by the actions of the principal.

The other aspects of this factor to receive considerable verbal input during interviews were the assessing and reporting methods used by schools. Approximately one third of the parents expressed negative opinions about the performance of the school or teachers in this area. Parents were consistent in their desire for accurate, specific feedback about their child. Many of the negative comments received were about the apparent lack of teacher knowledge about an individual child, or the lack of specific information concerning the steps that would be taken by the teacher to remedy a weakness or develop a strength for an individual child. Parents were frequently critical of the small amount of time made available for parent-teacher interviews and spoke of the difficulty of engaging in meaningful dialogue in a short time period. Superintendents shared this concern and were high in their praise of schools that gave advance notice to parents of the topics to be discussed at a parent-teacher interview. This advance notice was seen as allowing parents to prepare for the interview and thereby facilitating genuine information sharing. All superintendents thought that irrespective of the reporting procedures followed by schools, written information about the child should be given to the parents. Parents were divided about the format for the reporting process. Approximately equal numbers wanted written reports, interviews or a combination of both.

Principals expressed concern about assessing and reporting student attainment and progress, and many were grappling with the issue within their school. Most were of the opinion that various approaches were needed; the approaches must be closely linked to the teaching process and clearly understood by the children. Several principals thought that too much attention was being given to what should be a smaller part of the process, the material sent home to parents. This reflected the overall low effectiveness ratings given by principals for the way in which assessing student work and reporting to students was handled, but the high effectiveness rating given for reporting student progress to parents. Many principals were of the opinion that they had abdicated their responsibility of reporting the performance of a child in relation to others within a similar age range. This was also a concern of some of the parents.

Facilities and Financial Management

There were three items within this factor. Two related to the maintenance of the internal and external environment of the school while the third concerned the processes used to establish a school budget.

Superintendent and principal responses indicated that schools were given higher effectiveness ratings on this factor than any other. The mean value for this factor on a five-point scale was 3.87 for parent responses, 3.90 for principal responses and 3.50 for superintendent responses. Within the factor only 9% of schools were assigned ratings of not effective or slightly effective by superintendents. Given that superintendents rated one third of their sample as non-effective schools, the 9% rating indicated that they perceived most schools were effective in those aspects tasks covered by this factor.

All superintendents thought that the school budget should be set with the involvement of parents and staff, while 91% of principals and 88% of parents expressed the same opinion. Principals rated their effectiveness for the development of a school budget equally as high as their effectiveness in communicating with all staff. Both items had a mean value of 4.11 on the five point scale used and were higher than the means for any other of the 40 items. Though 61% of parents ranked the school's performance as highly effective or extremely effective, this mean value ranked twelfth among parents' ratings. Parents were critical of government financial constraints which were seen to be detrimental to schools. In the questionnaire responses 44% of parents thought that the monetary constraints were detrimental to the full provision of staff and that as a result class sizes were on the increase, while 11% indicated that building maintenance was being neglected.

There was a common perception among all three groups concerning what a school should look like and it was a factor parents considered when making choices about a school for their children to attend. All wanted the school to be neat and tidy with the grounds and buildings indicating care and attention to detail, and 93% of parents thought that the schools were moderately, highly or extremely effective at this. All persons interviewed wanted the interior of the school to be bright and colorful with the work of children displayed. Most thought this indicated pride in the work of the children while superintendents suggested that the display of children's work reminded visitors of the purpose of schools. Parents and superintendents thought that the manner of the front office staff was a critical component in reinforcing or negating the positive first impressions generated by a bright foyer and well cared-for grounds.

Goal Focus

There were two items within this factor. The first concerned the processes used to set school goals while the second focussed on the joint planning by principal and staff to achieve the goals.

Superintendent responses resulted in this factor receiving the lowest mean value for the seven factors while principals saw their effectiveness on this factor as the second lowest. The mean value calculated from principal responses was 3.66 and for superintendents the calculated mean value was 3.14 on the five-point scale. Parent responses for the two items in this factor had a lower percentage of extremely effective ratings than for all other items in the scale. Principals as a group had fewer extremely effective ratings for the process of setting school goals than for all but one other item, that was concerned with improving the work of staff.

The first item invited respondents to choose the appropriate group for the process of setting school goals and 82% of parents, 91% of principals and all but one superintendent thought that parents and staff should jointly set the school goals. The three groups of respondents thought that a common vision or purpose for the school was essential and that team work was required to achieve this vision. Parents and superintendents were emphatic that parents should be active team members. Principals were concerned about the level of parental participation. Some thought that there was a potential to devalue the expertise of teachers if parents were participating in decision making in the areas that were considered the domain of the professionals. Principals were consistent in expressing the need for agreed goals because they are the yardstick against which all performance in the myriad activities of the school should be measured.

Superintendents thought that success in the process of goal setting depended on the ability of the principal. The principal needed to articulate some personal goals for the school, then influence staff and parents for their involvement in merging individual goals and generating an alliance in pursuing the agreed upon goals. The process used must engender ownership so that all team members focus energy on goal achievement. This idea appeared to relate to the participatory management style and decision-making processes reported earlier, and was seen as essential by all groups for the generation of effective schools. Nevertheless, superintendents thought that without persistent articulation of a central purpose by the principal of a school, the process of generating a school vision would wither on the vine. Parents and superintendents thought that success in generating a team approach was one indicator of the effectiveness of a principal. Principals indicated that the importance of clearly stated goals had increased. They thought that as more and more responsibilities are delegated to schools, school personnel must be clear about what they wish to achieve. Principals indicated that although publicly stated goals increased accountability, they were a necessary part of the disbursement of accountability and hence parents' participation in formulation of those goals was essential. Superintendents thought that schools were ineffective in making public their plans for achieving school goals and were ineffective in declaring the evaluative strategies they would use to measure the attainment of goals. Superintendents indicated, however, that the state education system had provided very poor modelling in this aspect of its operations and the development of system three-year plans and evaluative strategies must become a priority. It was seen as inappropriate to expect principals to have good processes if the administrators of the system failed to be credible in the same area.

Parental Support

The two items within the factor *Parental Support* required the principal to enlist the support of parent groups and to clarify the educational program to the parents.

Principal and parent responses were such that this factor had the lowest effectiveness level among the seven factors with mean values of 3.63 and 3.57 respectively on the five point scale used. Parents gave schools more not effective and slightly effective responses for item 36--clarifying the educational program to parents--than for any other of the 40 items in the scale. Even though superintendents had rated one third of the sample of schools as highly effective schools they only gave 12% of the schools an extremely effective rating for item 36, which indicated their perception of lesser effectiveness in this area.

All people interviewed were unanimous about the need for parental support and all spoke of support as synonymous with parent participation. All made known the difference between genuine parental participation in decision making as contrasted with consultation about issues and parent involvement in voluntary work. Participation was seen to comprise parent activity equal to that of staff members in the highest level of decision making within the management of the school.

Parents linked their participation to the idea of team work for the achievement of the best possible education for their children. Many parents thought that the degree of parent participation was dictated by the attitude of the principal and staff. Where parents perceived that their input was valued their willingness to participate increased. There was some degree of indecisiveness about the appropriate level of participation in curriculum management but most parents tended to think that they should be involved in broad policy discussions, and the details could then be left to the professional educators. Principals were much more divided about the appropriate areas for participation and involvement by parents. Many principals thought that only a minority of parents wanted to be involved in anything beyond fund raising, grounds maintenance and general advice to the principal. Some principals were also concerned that once the parents were really participating, they would get to see the "warts and all" and that this would be detrimental to the efforts of the school.

Superintendents issued three cautions about the system's moves to increase the level of parental participation. They were concerned about the rate of increasing parental participation if parents were not generally ready for it, the possibility of creating an elite group of parents who chose to be involved and who then made it harder for other parents to become involved, and the possibility of parents rejecting the premises used by educators for decision making. Irrespective of these cautions superintendents thought that there was more to be gained than lost and supported moves for increased levels of parental participation in the management of schools. Superintendents thought that parental participation led to an increase in the level of the home-school team concept, an improved ability by schools to implement decisions, an increased knowledge by parent of the constraints under which schools operated, and more openness by schools to attitudes other than the potentially insular attitudes of staff.

Academic Program Focus

This factor had within it three items, emphasis on the social skills of students, emphasis on student creativity, and coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels.

Parents, principals and superintendents gave schools a higher effectiveness rating for their emphasis on the development of student social skills than for their emphasis on the development of student creativity. Schools were highly effective or extremely effective in emphasizing the development of important social skills according to 68% of parents, 65% of principals, and 54% of superintendents. Social interaction was repeatedly linked to student happiness or morale and student concerns in this area were consistently mentioned by parents as a reason for contacting the school.

Coordination of the curriculum between year levels was frequently mentioned by superintendents who thought that principals needed assistance with this aspect of their curriculum management process. This was supported by principals, as 48% of them rated their school not effective, slightly effective or moderately effective on this aspect of curriculum management. Both principals and superintendents were concerned about the wider aspect of coordination of curriculum between schools and cited problems faced by students who transferred schools.

Predictors of Overall Principal Effectiveness

When overall principal effectiveness was used as the criterion, the factor *Principal as Nexus* accounted for 67% of the variance for parents, 39% of the variance for principals and 84% of the variance for superintendents. Two other factors, *Plant and Financial Management* and *Student Centeredness* entered the regression as parent predictors. They collectively added only 1.6% to the total variance but had Pearson correlation coefficients of .41 and .54 respectively, with the dependent variable overall principal effectiveness.

Predictors of Overall School Effectiveness

Four school effectiveness factors accounting for 48% of the variance were the best predictors of parental judgements about overall school effectiveness. The factors were *Student Centeredness* (39%), *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* (5% and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .61), *Facilities and Financial Management* (3% and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .41) and *Goal Emphasis* (between 1% and 2% and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .53). Principals' predictors of overall school effectiveness, which accounted for 62% of the variance, were the factors *Principal as Nexus* (52%), *Goal Emphasis* (8% and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .62) and *Facilities and Financial Management* (3% and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .54). Superintendent predictors of overall school effectiveness, which accounted for 89% of the variance were the factors *Parental Support* (85%) and *Principal as Nexus* (between 3% and 4% and a Pearson correlation coefficient of .92).

Relationship Between Overall Principal Effectiveness and Overall School Effectiveness

Parents, principals and superintendents saw a positive correlation between overall principal effectiveness and overall school effectiveness. Analysis of questionnaire responses from each group gave Pearson correlation coefficients of .51, .55, and .91 respectively between the two variables. All persons interviewed reinforced these positive correlations, with parents and superintendents being more emphatic about the strength of the relationship than were principals.

Constraints on the Attainment of Principal and School Effectiveness

Parents, principals and superintendents indicated that the provision of adequate resources was critical to the attainment of maximum school effectiveness. Parents were concerned about the number of teachers and the provision of support staff. Principals were concerned about the staffing formulae and the increased number of teachers who would suffer displacement. Superintendents were concerned about the constraints imposed on schools because of the provision of inappropriate staff and the high staff turnover in some school locations.

Principals and superintendents saw that ineffective staff professional development programs inhibited the attainment of maximum school effectiveness, while parents thought that principals did not receive sufficient management training.

All groups in the interview gave credence to the importance of the abilities of the principal. It was seen that an effective principal improved the effectiveness of a school. All people interviewed placed a great deal of emphasis on the interpersonal skills repertoire of the principal. If there were deficiencies, they were seen to inhibit the attainment of maximum effectiveness. The interpersonal skill level of the principal was seen to affect the ability of the school to form a cohesive central vision and an agreed set of goals. The attainment of these goals needed to be accomplished by team work. If the principal could not provide a focus for the school or establish a team approach to the achievement of that purpose, then both the principal and school were seen to be ineffective.

As well as the interpersonal skill level of the principal the non-approachability of teachers was seen to be a contributing factor to school ineffectiveness by the parents. Parents wanted to feel able to contact the school on any issue and to be listened to with empathy. This may mean that a principal or teacher needed to admit to having made a mistake. Failure to do this caused frustration for parents and reflected negatively on the school. Approachability linked with parental participation and parental participation was seen to contribute to school effectiveness. However, the level of such participation definitely depended on the attitudes of the staff and principal. According to parents, non-utilization of parent skills and abilities constrained the attainment of school effectiveness.

As well as focussing on the interpersonal skill level of the principal and the attainment of a central purpose for a school, superintendents indicated that principals had not received sufficient support from them. This had inhibited principals' attainment of effectiveness and so decreased the potential effectiveness level of schools. In superintendents' opinions principals who were not prepared to learn were definitely linked to ineffective schools.

Parents thought that the discontinuity of their children's experiences inhibited school effectiveness. This lack of continuity was caused by the leave provisions for teachers and the resultant number of contract teachers within the school system.

Strategies for the Improvement of Principal and School Effectiveness

Parents identified three major strategies for improving the effectiveness of both principals and schools. They indicated that it was necessary to concentrate on the professional development of principals with particular emphasis on their communication skills; to increase the level of parental participation in the management of schools; and, to find ways to market education by raising the profile of schools and education generally within the media. Principals indicated four strategies for overcoming the inhibitors that they had identified. They were of the opinion that the principal selection procedure should receive attention; parent participation levels in the management of schools should increase; the role of the superintendent should be used for principal development and training; and, principals should have greater control over their resources. Superintendents stressed the positive correlation between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness and they proposed a series of measures that focussed on the professional development of principals. They contended that this was the best way to produce a change in the overall effectiveness levels of schools.

Parental Interventions

Apart from concerns about children's safety, children's medical conditions and parent concern about a child's academic attainment, all other parental interventions were prompted by concern for the morale or happiness of a child. Parents indicated that there were three crucial components of a child's school life that affected the happiness of the child. These were the child's social interactions with peers, the nature of the relationship between the child and the teacher, and the degree of academic success experienced by the child.

Principals perceived that parents contacted the teacher or the principal when concerned about the class to which a child had been allocated; when the academic progress of the child was not meeting the parents' expectations; when the parents were concerned about a social or behavioral problem associated with their child; when parents were concerned with the approach of an individual teacher; or when parents had nobody else to talk with about a problem they were facing in their own lives.

Superintendents were of the opinion that parents contacted them because of a concern for their child or because of their concern about the ability of the principal. In the first case the concern had in most cases initially led them to the school but the failure of school personnel to satisfy these concerns prompted the parents to contact the superintendent for assistance in resolving the problem.

Responses to Parental Interventions

Principals and superintendents indicated that most contacts at the school level and with the superintendent were initiated by telephone. The majority of principals and superintendents attempted to arrange a face to face meeting to follow the initial contact and resolve the problem. Many were quite willing to meet the parents at their home or a location they wished to nominate. Principals and superintendents thought that rapid responses were essential, with superintendents indicating that they attempted to follow up on a call that day if at all humanly possible, and that the maximum time they allowed to elapse would be a week.

When approached by parents, principals tended to ask if the parents had spoken with the classroom teacher about the issue and if not, usually requested them to do so, while superintendents asked the parents if they had made contact with the school. If the parents had not done so most superintendents advised the parents to contact the school and then advised if they were not happy with the outcome to contact them again. If a parent was reluctant to do this many of the superintendents indicated that they were prepared to contact the school on behalf of the parent or with the parent. In many cases a superintendent would organize and chair a joint meeting between the school personnel involved and the parents. This was a reflection of superintendent sensitivity to parental interventions. It also reflected the perception of many of superintendents that they were the gateways to the school system for parents and that parent rights were sometimes ignored by schools. Many superintendents saw themselves as a service agency for parents. In cases where the parents took the advice of the superintendent and were willing to contact the school the superintendent most often telephoned the school and advised the principal of their actions. They frequently asked the principal if they were prepared to handle the problem or whether they wished that the superintendent remained involved. Superintendents indicated that principals mostly elected to handle the issue themselves.

Principals and superintendents spoke of the anger and hostility that were frequently present when parent contact was made with them. All said that it was necessary to deal with this anger before attempting to seek solutions for the problem or issue. Following the dispersal of anger principals and superintendents indicated they negotiated with the person making the complaint to see how they wished to have the issue resolved. After listening to and negotiating with the parents, principals and superintendents then spoke with the second party to the dispute. This was part of their process of checking perceptions and looking for common ground. This part of the problem resolution sometimes raised a dilemma for principals. They saw a duty to support and protect their staff but at the same time they acknowledged a professional responsibility for the children in their care. Once common ground had been found principals and superintendents arranged a meeting or telephoned the parties to discuss the solution and strategies that would be followed to ensure that the solution is implemented. All principals and superintendents interviewed had some personal process for ensuring follow up occurred with the parents who had initiated the complaint. Irrespective of the perceptions of principals and superintendents, only 50% of the interviewed parents who had contacted a school with a concern were satisfied with the outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study raise important questions about school effectiveness, principal effectiveness, and parental interventions to the school system and the resolution of these concerns, particularly in the context of previous research. This section examines the issues raised and insights to be gained from this study.

School Effectiveness

Parents, principals and superintendents rated schools as moderately to highly effective in both an overall sense and across a wide variety of variables with parents consistently rating the effectiveness of principals above the ratings principals gave to their own effectiveness. This is in marked contrast to a study by Johnson (1988) who reported that principals in Alberta always rated their own performance higher than all other respondents when assessing their personal effectiveness. His study also indicated that the most important aspect for school effectiveness was "maintaining an appropriate school climate" and this was also the aspect that had the highest levels of effectiveness. Data gathered within this study indicated that parents and principals were in agreement that the most important aspects for school effectiveness were principal two-way channels of communication with all staff, closely followed by the degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and the rest of the staff.

The literature on school effectiveness has exhibited an array of criteria and problems for judging school and principal effectiveness, but as Bossert (1988) indicated, these

> problems do not suggest that the findings from the effectiveness studies should be ignored. The cumulative evidence, as well as the practical experience of educators, supports the importance of having high expectations for students, developing a positive climate, improving instruction and demonstrating leadership. These are necessary but probably not sufficient elements for effective schools. (cited in Grady, Wayson, & Zirkel, 1989, p. 21).

Data generated by this study indicated that effective schools were seen by respondents to have the following common factors: *Principal as Nexus, Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff, Student Centeredness, Facilities and Financial Management, Goal Emphasis, Parental Support,* and *Academic Program Focus.*

The importance attached to each school effectiveness factor varied with the constituency identifying the effectiveness level of a school. Parent predictors for judgements about overall school effectiveness were the factors *Student Centeredness, Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff, Facilities and Financial Management* and *Goal Emphasis,* while principals gave emphasis to the *Principal as Nexus, Goal Emphasis,* and *Facilities and Financial Management.* Superintendent predictors of overall school effectiveness were *Parental Support* and *Principal as Nexus.* This reiterates the importance that should be given to Cameron's (1980) six critical questions when judging school effectiveness. His second question, "whose perspective, or which constituency's point of view is being considered?" (p. 75) is therefore crucial. Given the movement within South Australian schools for increased parental involvement in the highest levels of school management decision making, these findings are significant. Parents are becoming more involved in the management of schools and the findings of this study indicate that they bring a different perspective to the decision-making processes.

Principal as Nexus

Leithwood (1982) claimed that only a small amount was known about the program-specific behavior of effective principals and that "large critical components of effective behavior are still to be discovered" (p. 31). However, the many exploratory studies on effective principals have identified a number of characteristics of effective principals. Bossert et al. (1982) collapsed these into four dimensions; (a) emphases on the formulation and achievement of goals; (b) coordination of programs, discipline, evaluation, staff development and other activities; (c) use of human relations skills to approve success and foster teachers' growth, morale and commitment; and, (d) exercise of influence in instructional decision making.

This study identified fifteen specific items associated with the activities of principals in effective schools and all constituent groups identified the factor *Principal as Nexus* as an important indicator of principal effectiveness. Within this factor there were items with emphases on the communication skills of the principal; the principal modelling learning and being actively involved with curriculum activities within the school; maintaining high expectations of staff, providing feedback to staff and improving their work; maintaining an open school climate; the ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school; and, the principal giving recognition to the uniqueness of the individual school community.

The communication abilities of principals were seen by all constituents to be important. Superintendents and principals agreed that they were base skills that were required if other higher-level activities were to be successful. This is in accord with the work by Gronn (1983) that showed that talk is central to the work of a principal. This is also congruent with Hodgkinson (1978, p. 204) who said "language is the basic administrative tool." Talk is the vehicle through which control is generated and must be worked at consistently and continuously. Language has power and cloaks the use of power (Hodgkinson, 1978), and it is through persistent articulation of a vision for the school that principals influence those around them to subscribe to the vision.

The ability of a principal to declare a personal set of goals was seen to be very important by each respondent group. Principals and superintendents indicated that the principal's ability to do this was the catalyst for the resultant generation of a vision for a school. Vision is but part of the culture of a school and it is through the management of culture that the principal engenders cohesiveness for all participants. Deal and Kennedy (1982) indicated that symbols keep alive the spirit of the goals and help keep people focussed. The modelling done by the principal within a school is part of that symbolism. Principals through their own learning indicate to all staff that the learning of adults within a school is important. It provides a spur for staff themselves to keep current with developing knowledge and trends. The involvement of the principal in the curriculum activities within the school reinforces the importance of this aspect of the school's operation. Parents wanted to see the principals with a high profile in the activities of the school, with a current knowledge of new teaching methods, and with a preparedness to try new ideas and methods. They rated the latter two items as the tenth and twelfth most important items out of the 40 items used for the school effectiveness scale and rated principals as highly effective in doing so (mean value of responses 4.13 and 4.12 respectively on the five point scale used). Superintendents thought that if principals were actively involved in a personal learning program then they could be more persuasive in articulating high expectations to staff. High expectations as a variable has been consistently related to school effectiveness. Wimpleberg's (1988) contention, as the result of a study in Louisiana, is that expectations are part of the personality and belief systems or the people within a school and as such form part of the cultural dimension of a school. This is in accord with the effective schools literature where, specifically, high expectations refer to a climate where the staff expects students to do well, believes that students can do well, believes in its ability to influence student achievement and accepts responsibility for student achievement. All constituent groups were of the opinion that the principal's high expectations were of paramount importance for generating staff high expectations and formed part of the culture of an individual school.

The principal's reinforcement of the school's culture by modelling learning, maintaining high expectations for all staff, and communicating these expectations is in accord with the work by Little (1982) and Shoemaker & Fraser (1981), both cited in Johnson (1988, p. 57). Little (1982) also maintained that the principals of effective schools stressed and fostered collegiality. This was emphasized by people interviewed during the study and was indicative of their concern for the development of teamwork for the achievement of school goals.

The maintenance of an open climate within a school was an aspect of the factor *Principal as Nexus*. Murphy et al. (1985) stated that within the effective schools literature framework, climate has three components:

> (1) important norms that guide behavior, for example, high expectations for performance and staff accountability for student performance; (2) organizational processes that help the school community to carry out important work, for example shared decision-making and open communications; and (3) structures that reinforce and/or provide the context for quality instruction, for example discipline procedures and systems for involving students in school activities. (p. 366)

The first of their three points is a specific item under the factor *Principal as Nexus* while the latter two are components of the factors *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* and *Student Centeredness*. Climate was seen to be an important component of the factor

Principal as Nexus and parents linked an open school climate with the approachability of the principal and staff. Principals and superintendents thought that trust levels between the principal and staff were an indicator of an open climate and both groups thought that a school should be a happy productive place where both students, staff and parents feel welcome. It was seen by all constituent groups that "happy teachers produced happy students" and this was of importance to all because student happiness and morale was of high concern. Student unhappiness quickly energized parents to contact a teacher or principal within a school or a superintendent, seeking rectification of the cause of the student's unhappiness.

The factor *Principal as Nexus* has an emphasis on the management and reinforcement of the culture of a school. It is in line with the theoretical approach proposed by Sergiovanni (1984) where a focus on cultural forces is associated with excellence in schooling. Within his model of leadership and excellence in schooling Sergiovanni proposed that the cultural or "High priest" principal has the base skills required of the technical, human, educational and symbolic leaders. These leadership constructs included communication skills; an ability to generate a cohesive group; staff supervisory skills; professional knowledge and management skills; the ability to model personal learning processes and provide staff in-service; presence within the classrooms and an ability to provide a unified vision. These are all components of the factor *Principal as Nexus* and as such the findings lend support to Sergiovanni's proposal. When these listed component skills and activities are present the leader can focus on generating the culture of the school so that people within the school become believers of the school as an ideological system. This belief becomes highly motivating for all of the members of the school community. A central purpose, vision and goals were seen by all constituents as extremely important for principal effectiveness and therefore, by implication, for school effectiveness.

Goal Emphasis

Goal Emphasis was a predictor of overall school effectiveness for principals and parents. Johnson & Snyder (1985) and Rosenholtz (1985) have emphasized the necessity for a collaborative approach for goal development and this is a feature of this factor. The concept of collaboration for setting goals had very high agreement from all people interviewed. Chapman (1986) found that six of the top ten factors which had a positive perceived level of influence on the effectiveness of Victorian primary school principals were associated with collaborative, participatory approaches to decision making and management. In accordance with the research cited above, all constituents saw that the principal was responsible for managing the goal setting process and the principal's personal articulation of goals for the school was part of instigating the process and indicated a commitment for the establishment of such goals. All saw that the achievement of goals required team work. Purkey and Smith (1983) in their review of school effectiveness research identified four cultural variables; (a) collegial relationships and collaborative work; (b) a sense of community; (c) clearly defined goals and high expectations; and, (d) a sense of order and discipline with little noise, distraction and risk. It can be seen that the first three are supported by the processes within the *Goal Emphasis* factor and reinforced by all constituent groups during the interviews. However, each group's responses to questionnaire items indicated that this factor was either the least effective or second least effective aspect of the operation of schools.

Academic Program Focus

Within the factor *Academic Program Focus* there were emphases on the development of social relationships, the development of student creativity, and the coordination of program continuity. Neither parents nor principals placed an equally high emphasis on two other questionnaire items, students encouraged to strive for academic success and emphasis on academic attainment, and these two items were not in the forty most important items for school effectiveness. This was in marked contrast to much of the literature on effective schools where there is an emphasis on academic attainment. The social relationships that students have with their peers and the nature of the relationship between teacher and students was of prime importance to parents. Concerns in this area quickly motivated parents to contact the classroom teacher or the principal. If the issue was not addressed to their satisfaction they then sought the assistance of the superintendent for help in resolving the issue.

Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff

The nine items within the factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff* indicate the importance placed upon facets of the activities of staff, the majority of parents and principals rated staff performance within the factor as highly or extremely effective. Principal and superintendent responses gave the item, teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school, the highest effectiveness level within this factor with mean scores of 3.92 and 3.47 (on a five-point scale) respectively. Parents rated the effectiveness of staff lower within this factor (sixth overall) but the mean value calculated from their responses was 3.69. All constituent groups reinforced the importance of a staff development program during interviews. Parents saw it as a way to ensure that their children were taught by competent teachers with current professional knowledge. Parents saw that demonstrated ongoing learning by teachers was a professional responsibility. Principals and superintendents also saw that teachers required a personal professional development program that focussed on addressing areas of weakness while capitalizing on areas of strength. Both agreed that the maintenance of such a program was an important component of the principal's role. The focus on staff development that emerged during the study was in accordance with Purkey and Smith's (1983) review of effective schools research, where staff development was one of the nine structural variables associated with school effectiveness.

Student Centeredness

Student Centeredness emerged as the first predictor used by parents when assessing the overall effectiveness of a school and was ranked by both principals and superintendents as the second highest effectiveness mean among the seven school effectiveness factors. Only one item within this factor, a student behavior management program, was identified by the Purkey and Smith (1983) review of school effectiveness research. Within this factor parents, principals and superintendents were concerned with the processes used by schools to assess and report on students' work. Schools were seen by all groups to be much more effective in reporting to parents than in their ability to give feedback and report student progress to students. Given that parents, principals and superintendents see academic attainment and progress for students while at school as one of the major purposes of school, the perception of lesser effectiveness with staff in giving feedback to students should be of concern to staff. Irrespective of this, one third of the parents interviewed expressed concern with the processes used by schools. Parents consistently spoke of (1) the lack of specific information given to them by teachers particularly when they were proposing special remedial action for individual students, and (2) the lack of sufficient time for parent-teacher interviews when they were conducted.

Along with academic attainment, student morale and satisfaction were also seen by parents to be linked to the social interactions students had with their teachers and peers. Concerns in this domain quickly energized parents to contact the classroom teacher or the principal of the school seeking resolution of the perceived problem.

Parental Support

Though Purkey and Smith (1983) found little evidence to support its inclusion, they added parent support as one of the nine structural variables associated with effective schools. Chapman (1986) found, in a survey of 100 primary school principals within Victoria, that increasing parental participation in schools was the factor with the most positive perceived level of influence on the effectiveness of a primary principal. Six of the first ten factors she identified, that had positive perceived influence on the effectiveness of primary principals, related to changed emphases between principals and parents. All constituent groups in this study saw that increased levels of parental participation in the management of schools were desirable. This indicates a move towards greater parental control of education. Cullingford (1985) argued that discussions about the level of parental participation are really discussions about control. The moves for increased parental participation are congruent with the ideology of the Labor Party, currently the governing political party within South Australia. The increased parental participation in all phases of decision making within the management of schools will inevitably lead to a diminishing of the buffers that have traditionally protected the core technology of the school, the teaching processes within the classrooms. This may lead to challenges of the staff about the methodologies that they employ. As one superintendent indicated, "if a school hasn't got its curriculum management together, increased parental participation could be counter productive and lead to staff feeling threatened." However, it is not just the local school that may come under pressure. Some of the premises used by management personnel of a school district as the basis for decision making, particularly those associated with school closures, could come under attack.

The major area of difference in perceptions about the nature and degree of the parental participation was in the area of curriculum management. Principals were sensitive to parent participation in this area and cited the possible devaluing of teacher expertise. Principals thought only a minority of parents wished to participate in curriculum decision making while the majority of parents indicated that they wanted to participate in broad curriculum guideline decision making but leave the specific content to the trained professionals. The differences in perceptions about the appropriateness and willingness for involvement could produce tensions.

Under the factor *Parental Support* there was common agreement about the differences between parental involvement and parental participation. Involvement implied that parents were a resource to be used for activities within the school, to be consulted with when decision were to be made but not necessarily playing a major part in the final decision making. Participation was seen to extend to parents being considered as equal partners in the decision-making processes. Meyer, Scott and Deal (1983) proposed that schools live or die according to their conformity to environmental rules rather than to particular output demands. By implication therefore schools need to keep their environmental constituencies happy and as such schools are most sensitive to dissidence and dissatisfaction. If the parent organizations and the Education Department continue to actively promote increased parental participation in the management of schools then principals could come under pressure from their local parents. Parents interviewed readily discussed their perception that their level of participation was dictated by the attitudes of the principals and staff. It will soon be seen by parents that the rejection of their increased participation by some principals is in conflict with the stated policy. However, the principals are the "street level bureaucrats" responsible for the implementation of policy concerning parental participation and will determine the form of the implemented policy. The perceptions of parents and principals conflict and this could have implications for the development of parental participation in the management of schools as currently proposed by the Education Department of South Australia.

Payne (1987) in his study of parent control of principal work behavior in Alberta found that the effects of parental influence could be seen in principal behavior. From an analysis of his data he extracted fifty-four propositions but indicated that a major weakness of the study was a lack of data from parents. Data gathered from parents in this study reinforce and extend some of his propositions.

> Proposition 4. Parents are exerting influence across a wider range of school operations, but the influence is less acceptable to organizational participants in core teaching and personnel matters.

The discussion above supports this contention and it is the basis for the difference in perception about the appropriate level of participation in the curriculum management area.

Proposition 19. The principal is of importance to, and responsible for, the school.

Proposition 20. Parents regard the principal as, in effect, the school.

Parents consistently articulated the importance of the principal's responsibility for the school and non-effectiveness in many areas of school performance was seen to indicate an ineffective principal. When commenting on the relationship between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness parents were emphatic that it was a very strong positive correlation and this could be summarized by the parent who said "many statements about the school are really statements about the principal."

Proposition 26. The principal decides how much influence parents will have in the school.

Parents indicated that in spite of the policy for increased parental participation, the actual level of their participation was dictated by the attitude of the principal and staff. Where parents saw that their input was valued and acted upon the level of participation quickly increased. However, where principals articulated the importance of parental participation but their actions were not congruent with this, the level of genuine participation was low.

Proposition 52. Provincial early childhood policies are a leading edge in the growth of parental influence in schools.

Parents interviewed consistently indicated the level of their involvement, teacher response to and encouragement for that involvement, was higher in junior primary classrooms than in primary classrooms. The parents indicated that this was changing and saw that their expectations about appropriate involvement had been shaped by the junior primary experiences.

Summary

The findings of this study add support to many of the factors identified by Purkey and Smith's (1983) review of effective schools research. However, the identification of the seven school effectiveness factors provides a focus for, and emphasis on the activities undertaken by principals and staff in effective schools.

The premises against which school effectiveness judgements were made by each constituent group were not specified (e.g., reading attainment at specified ages). Rather the position was taken, as was the case with Johnson's (1988) study in Alberta, that many effectiveness criteria are only subjectively assessable and the judgements made are dependent upon the circumstances, the constituency and the individuals whose perceptions are sought. Concomitant with this is the idea that it is better to provide practitioners, principals and superintendents, with tools for gauging and improving school effectiveness rather than a specified master plan for action. These tools, the seven school effectiveness factors, for improving effectiveness include the knowledge of important dimensions and the task areas within each dimension plus their own and others' assessment of current performance.

Constraints on the Attainment of School Effectiveness and Strategies for Their Resolution

Constraints on the effectiveness of principals and schools are not well documented. Renihan & Renihan (1984) identified four that inhibited the effectiveness of schools. They referred to their first as displacement of "student-centered" goals by "soft-ware centered' goals in education. This had occurred with recent concern for the quality of facilities and standardized educational programs with a resultant depersonalization of education for the students. *Student Centeredness* was one of the seven factors identified as important to school effectiveness and the first predictor used by parents to judge the overall effectiveness of a school. There were two related components within the factor. First a concern for the monitoring of student progress and attainment with the results communicated to both parents and students. Schools were seen to be relatively ineffective by all constituent groups in reporting back to students. Given that this aspect relates to the other focus, student satisfaction and morale, it would appear to be an area requiring attention. The efforts being made and the processes currently used in reporting to students could be counter productive for the generation of student morale and satisfaction.

The second constraint identified by Renihan & Renihan (1984) was "a climate of territorialism" that caused competing interests to indulge in power games and inhibited cooperation. The idea of cooperation between staff and the willingness of staff to work for the improvement of the total school were aspects of the second factor *Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff*. Principals and superintendents gave great credence to the importance of staff having a focus that was wider than their individual classroom. If teachers did not give cognizance to the needs of the staff as a collective and therefore the necessity to pursue a common staff development program, it was seen to inhibit the development of teamwork and the pursuit of school goals.

Their third factor was tradition which constrains attitudes and behavior. This was mentioned by principals and superintendents as a constraint. Some expressed the need for a complete rethinking of the concept of school and the mental images that the word produced. These common perceptions were perceived by some to be redundant and an impediment to change. Parents were especially critical of the barriers between schools and the parent community and the resultant inflexibility of schools. They indicated that the education of the students suffered because many valuable resources were not utilized in the educational programs offered. Several parents and principals thought that the concept of school evoking mental pictures of a series of classrooms with a teacher in each may be anachronistic. Parents thought that the management structure of schools should be reviewed and the arrangement of principal and deputy principal as the administrative arm of the primary school may be redundant.

Fourthly, Renihan & Renihan (1984) identified the poor quality of leadership as a constraint on school effectiveness. Questionnaire responses from all groups in this study generated positive correlations between the effectiveness of principals and the effectiveness of schools. The nature of the assessment of the correlations does not allow for generation of a conclusion about causality in this relationship. However, the people interviewed expressed strong opinions that good schools were that way because of good principals and not the reverse. Some indicated that good schools quickly "loose their gloss" with ineffective principals. This is a popular connection supported by many writers on effective schools but must be tempered by the cautions of critics such as "(Bossert et al., 1982; Clark et al., 1984; Hallinger and Murphy, 1978) [who] have emphasized that this connection, while seemingly reasonable, has frequently and unjustifiably been inferred from case studies and correlational findings" (Johnson 1988, p. 328). The interviewed persons' comments about the nature of the relationship between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness adds to the weight of the qualitative evidence already gathered and supported by so many writers on school effectiveness.

Superintendents acknowledged that they themselves were a constraint on school effectiveness. They thought that principals required more specific assistance in aspects of curriculum management and specifically in the coordination and continuity of the curriculum. This had not been provided by superintendents. Superintendents also saw that they were responsible for giving specific feedback to principals about their performance and acknowledged that this had been done poorly by them. Compounded with this, insufficient attention had been given by superintendents to professional development programs for principals and was an inhibitor to the attainment of school effectiveness. This was in marked contrast to the findings of Hewstone (1983) who in a study of attribution theory reported that persons who perceived a problem/failure blamed the environment or other persons in the environment for those problems.

Parental Interventions and Responses to Them

Parents, principals, and superintendents were in agreement about the nature and cause of parental interventions at the school but principals from schools in lower socio-economic areas also indicated that parents came to see them to discuss problems that were not related to school. These principals perceived that the parents did not know of other agencies available and so came to the school because people there were seen to be approachable.

When approached by parents, principals tended to ask the parents if they had been in contact with the teacher, while superintendents asked the parents if they had been in contact with the school. Superintendents thought that it was a principal's responsibility to resolve parent complaints and frequently indicated this to the principals. If a concern was not satisfactorily resolved by school personnel superintendents then assisted with the resolution of the difficulty. Fifty percent of parents interviewed, and who had contacted a school, were not happy with the response of the school and thought that their problem had not been resolved. Superintendents and principals indicated that they followed similar procedures for resolving conflict. Parents who were happy with the resolution of a problem also described such a process. This process included carefully listening to the complaint, finding out how the complainant wished to resolve the issue, listening to and discussing the issue with the second party to the complaint, negotiating with both parties the resolution of the problems and strategies to be followed, and following up in an appropriate form.

The resolution of complaints and the processes followed reinforced and extend some of the propositions stated by Payne (1987, pp. 316-321). This includes the following:

> Proposition 14. Parents exert considerable influence on teachers and their work.
>
> Proposition 11. Principals are highly responsive to parents, sensitive to parent wishes, and try to keep parents satisfied with the school.

Principals frequently ask parents who come to see them if they have contacted the teacher concerned. If not they usually ask them to do so or indicate that they will do so on their behalf. This generates an ethos of teacher responsibility to parent concerns; in effect, parents control the boundaries that define acceptable teacher actions. Principals indicated that they placed high importance on satisfying parental complaints and most did not wish for the superintendent to become involved. If they were contacted by a superintendent they indicated that as principal of the school they would resolve the issue.

Proposition 12. Superordinates expect principals to resolve parent problems without superordinates being involved, and principals see it in their best interest to do so.

Proposition 28. Superordinates strongly promote school responsiveness to parent expectations.

Proposition 37. Superordinates regard parents as the principal's responsibility and they make this attitude clear to principals.

Superintendents indicated that, after receiving a complaint from a parent, they contacted principals and advised them of their actions. They ask the principals if they wish to handle the issue themselves or wish for the superintendent to remain involved. Superintendents indicated that principals invariably elected to handle the issues themselves.

Proposition 39. Complaint handling by superordinates demonstrates they expect priority will be given to parent concerns and that the principal will satisfy parents.

Superintendents indicated that they give extremely high priority to handling parental complaints; most attempt to respond to the parents on the day that the complaint is received. Coupled with this, superintendents contact schools immediately after speaking with the p[illegible]ons making the complaint and as indicated above, expect principals to resolve the issues. Parents in fact control superintendent work behavior and the immediacy of superintendent response indicates to principals the priority that they need to give to such issues.

Implications

The findings from this study have important implications for policy making and practice as well as future inquiries into school effectiveness, parental interventions and resolution of the issues raised during those interventions.

Implications for Practice

This study adds to the considerable literature on school effectiveness, and could appear daunting for practitioners concerned with the improvement of personal as well as school effectiveness. No cookbook approach is offered but the seven school effectiveness factors do indicate the actions and focus for activities of principals and staff within effective schools, as judged by parents, principals and superintendents. The words of Reid, Hopkins, & Holly (1987, p. ii) could give solace to practitioners contemplating actions aimed at improvement. The school effectiveness literature

> is in agreement on two issues. First, positive features of 'effective schools' are to do with process-type manifestations of schooling. . . . The second aspect on which the literature is in agreement is that all of these features are amenable to alteration by concerted action on the part of the school staff.

The following are implications for practice generated by the study and may be of use for persons planning concerted action for improvement in the effectiveness of specific aspects of a school or principal's operations.

Beyond the generally pleasing finding that parents, principals and superintendents were moderately satisfied with both the effectiveness of principals and schools, a number of implications emerged from the data. The factor *Principal as Nexus* was seen to be crucial to the development of principal effectiveness and within this factor great emphasis was placed by all constituent groups on the interpersonal skills level of the principal. The communication abilities of principals were linked with parental and superintendent concerns about the approachability of principals. They thought that as well as being approachable principals need to be able to listen carefully to parents without becoming defensive, negotiate with all parties involved in the conflict, and ensure that agreed strategies were implemented. With this in mind there may be cause to examine the pre-service training of principals, and the in-service developmental courses available for principals. However, all respondent groups thought that improving the interpersonal skills level of an individual was extremely difficult and time consuming task and hence the interpersonal skill level of applicants may be a crucial facet requiring attention in the selection processes used to appoint principals.

The superintendent's role within South Australia has recently been redefined and principals and superintendents thought that it was now appropriate for the new role to give cognizance to the professional development needs of principals. Of particular concern were the demands for courses in increasing principal skills in staff supervisionary processes with an emphasis on giving meaningful feedback to staff. This was an area of lesser effectiveness for principals.

Parents, principals and superintendents were concerned about the coordination and continuity of the instructional program between year levels. This area could be the focus of curriculum management courses for principals as well as of concern to the various committees responsible for the generation of curriculum documentation.

Parents were concerned that their children received an education from competent professionally current teaching staff. This reinforced principal and superintendent perceptions of the importance of staff development programs. It was seen to be essential that such programs have a dual thrust, personal development as well as a total school development focus. This requires the provision of adequate time, which costs money, and hence should be of concern to persons involved in budget formulation. Of further implication to budget planners were the perceptions of all constituent groups for the need to use teacher expertise outside of the classroom for the development and management of a school. This may mean that classroom contact time for teachers may need to change. Many parents and principals saw the need to review the management structure of primary schools and thought that the concept of the principal and deputy principal being seen as the administrative arm of the school may redundant.

All constituent groups saw the necessity for parents being involved in the process of setting the goals of a school and saw that teamwork was necessary to achieve these school goals. The public articulation of the plans for achieving school goals and evaluating the progress towards their attainment was seen to be of lesser effectiveness. Principals and superintendents indicated that the total Education Department had provided very poor modelling in this matter. In this light the Education Department needs to publicly declare its goals for schools and the processes it will use to measure its own performance. Once this has been done it can then train principals and assist schools to undertake a similar process.

The assessing and reporting procedures used by schools generated a large amount of verbal data with approximately one third of parents interviewed expressing negative opinions. The concerns of all groups focussed on two main aspects, firstly, insufficient time was seen to be given to parent teacher interviews. This hindered the development of meaningful dialogue and information sharing. Successful parent teacher interviews require skilled sensitive teachers and as stressed here, sufficient time. The matter should be of concern to school staff when planning to hold interviews and consideration could be given to the amount of time allocated for each interview. Secondly schools were judged to be less effective in giving feedback to students about their progress and attainment than they were in giving the same feedback to parents. Parents, principals and superintendents saw a necessity for the students to fully understand the assessing processes used within a classroom and thought that children should be involved in negotiating aspects of the process. Principals and superintendents thought that the link between teaching assessing and learning should be the focus of any processes being used. Many principals indicated that they and their staff were grappling with the issues and it appears to be an area requiring continued developmental work.

Parents indicated that they give a great deal of attention to the class allocation processes used by schools. If they perceived that a child was split from a friendship group or have some concerns about the person who will be their child's classroom teacher they frequently contacted the school. The principal of one school indicated that parental input is sought prior to the finalization of class lists. This had the support of staff and has been very effective in diminishing the level of parental concern. It may be a process that would be of benefit to other schools.

The social interactions of children were of great concern to parents and one major facet was the quality of the relationship between child and classroom teacher. When there were problems in this area parents contacted the teacher or the principal seeking a resolution of the difficulties. Many parents spoke with emotion and evidenced a degree of frustration because they perceived that teachers usually see the students as the cause of the problem and do not acknowledge that they could also be at fault. It may be of advantage for principals to reflect on this matter and give cognizance to parent perceptions when dealing with this issue.

Parents, principals and superintendents were generally impressed with the level of effectiveness of schools in their presentation and upkeep of facilities. However, many commented on the importance of the front office foyer and the greeting they received when approaching staff. All wanted to see bright colorful displays of children's work with the walls and decor reflecting brightness and happiness. Non-changing displays were seen to be counter productive. Principals and staff could give attention to the manner in which children's work is displayed and to the a manner and perceived approachability of the person in the receptionist role. Personnel responsible for maintenance and painting of facilities could give recognition to the recent research on color and the effects on mood and purpose of people exposed to the colors, when writing specifications for maintenance contractors.

Increased parental participation in decision making for all aspects of the management of schools were promoted by all groups. However, concerns were expressed by parents and principals about the role parents should play in the area of curriculum management. The differing perception need to be confronted and negotiation occur in relation to parental participation in this area. The Education Department should give cognizance to the fact that principal and staff attitudes were perceived to control the actual level of parental participation. Without addressing this issue the implementation of the current policy in its present form, may be endangered. The suggestions by numerous principals and parents for in-service activities, jointly sponsored Education Department and state wide parent bodies, focussed on the parental participation policy appears to be a sound recommendation and worthy of further investigation.

Some parents, many principals and most superintendents spoke about the changed role for superintendents within South Australia. There was an expectation from these people that the changed role would allow superintendents to focus on the personal and group professional development needs of principals, provide superintendents with time to support principals within their schools, and to give meaningful feedback to principals about their performance. It would be wise for superintendents to acknowledge this percipience while negotiating and clarifying actual role performance. However, superintendent acceptance of a basic educative leadership function could depend upon the production of evidence of links to resultant school improvement.

Implications and Recommendations for Research

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge on school effectiveness by examining multiple constituent perceptions. This study for example, has highlighted the focus areas and activities of principals and staff in effective schools. It has also highlighted the breadth and complexity of educational leadership, a matter receiving much concerted and systematic investigation. By contributing to this body of knowledge about effective schools and effective principals this research can inform the persons responsible for the development of preparation programs for school administrators as well as inform those responsible for ongoing development corses for current administrators.

Perceptions of organizational effectiveness depend upon whose perspective, or which constituency's point of view is being considered. An understanding of school effectiveness is dependent not only upon performance but upon the respondents whose perceptions are used as a basis of measurement. Few researchers have given this matter the attention it deserves and as such the methodology employed in this study may be of assistance in this regard. Given that the role of parents in the administration of South Australian schools is changing, administrators who have relied upon the findings on effective schools for policy development and practice may need to widen their perspective to acknowledge the alternative viewpoints of parents presented in this study. As such, research on schools where parent participatory processes work well may allay principal fears and demonstrate that formal representation can work effectively in their interests.

Research is needed on how the multiple constituencies can best contribute to the education of the children. Ways in which superintendents can work directly with principals, school councils and parents need to be explored. This research could explore the optimum balances of influences between local accountability and the educational system's need for control. Principals are continually managing this balance but at the same time if a school community identity is to be created, principals are required to establish parental influence. Research could seek to establish the tensions, balances and checks within this tripartite relationship of principals, parents and superintendents and the resultant influences on the quality of the educational program for the children.

Research needs to be done with different levels of schooling as it seems clear that parental influence can differ markedly across levels of schooling. If parent influence is determined to be less significant at secondary school level, what are the reasons for this difference? The extent to which parent influence penetrates the core technology of teaching could also be explored. It was seen by respondents to be an area of tension within the current policy development of parental participation within South Australia.

There is a need to fill the most obvious gap in this study by researching teacher and student attitudes to school and principal effectiveness. Within that research attention could be given to student concerns about building and the maintaining social relationships with teachers and peers. This was of prime importance to parents and of greater significance than an emphasis on academic attainment. There was a perception expressed by superintendents that teachers who had not modified their teaching methodology to incorporate negotiation of teaching, learning, assessing processes and course content with students were more dominant in the complaint scenario that those who had made changes. This may be a fruitful area to research to see if links exist between methodological approach and overall school effectiveness. One superintendent also had a perception that there was a link between teacher methodology and teacher stress.

Student problems with social relationships were one of the most significant instigators of parental intervention at the school or district level. This study has indicated that fifty percent of parents who approach a school seeking resolution of perceived difficulties are unhappy with the results of those interventions. Further research could seek to establish whether the non-resolved concerns were linked to the approach taken by personnel at the school or to the issues that were the bases of the interventions.

Concluding Remarks

A concept of effectiveness is inherent in every person's mental conception of a school. Whether it is studied or not, parents, administrators and school staff will continue to make formal and informal assessment of a school or school system's performance. Against these judgements assessment of the quality of an administrator's work will be made. Continued research into school effectiveness will give added clarity to the looking glasses used by people. This will facilitate an improvement in the judgements being made and in the efforts being expended to improve the overall effectiveness level of principals and schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE

NAE

Northern Area
Education Office
Elizabeth House
Oxenham Drive
Elizabeth 5112
Telephone 256 8111
Fax 256 8252

Education
Department
of South
Australia

NORTHERN AREA EDUCATION

TO PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN AREA

During term three of this year Neville Highett will be working as a Superintendent of Schools in the Northern Area. He has been studying in Canada for the last two years and prior to that had been a Superintendent of Schools at Kadina since 1976.

While he is here he will:

work with the A/Director CASS and each Superintendent of Schools and a small group of principals to initiate and articulate a school development planning process,

work with the Director of Personnel and a group of principals to plan a professional development programme for school leaders.

Further information on these activities will be forthcoming.

While Neville is in the Northern Area he will also collect data for his Doctoral dissertation for the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. His dissertation will be based on research of factors associated with school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness.

Most of the research in the area of school effectiveness is based on urban schools in socially disadvantaged areas of North America. Hence your involvement with and support of his research will enable the results of the research and its South Australian perspective to be disseminated in North American journals. Copies of the final research will also be available for our use.

A series of Nominal Group Techniques meetings are planned with principals and superintendents. The data gathered from these meetings will be used to focus the development of a questionnaire. This questionnaire will then be distributed to principals, superintendents and parents.

I recommend the research to you and urge that you take this opportunity to be involved.

Yours sincerely

Denis Ralph

Denis Ralph
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

NAE

Northern Area
Education Office
Elizabeth House
Oxenham Drive
Elizabeth 5112
Telephone 256 8111
Fax 256 8252

Education
Department
of South
Australia

NORTHERN AREA EDUCATION

«name»
The Principal
«school»
«courier»

Dear «addressee»

I am preparing to conduct research in schools within the Northern Area that contain students in the R-7 range. I therefore seek your cooperation in this research which will form the basis of my Doctoral dissertation for the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta.

I invite you to assist me with the commencement of this research by attending one of the meetings detailed below. At the meeting you will participate in a data generating nominal group technique process that will provide me with principals' perceptions of factors associated with school effectiveness or school ineffectiveness. This data will be used to develop a questionnaire for distribuion to principals, parents and superintendents in early September. The results of each meeting will also be collated and distributed to all participants.

You will leave the meeting with a comprehensive set of notes on the Nominal Group Technique Meeting process and should then be able to apply it and use it in your school setting whenever you or your school community needs to deal with problems, set priorities, find solutions or reveiw proposals with a minimum of discussion.

The attached sheets outline this research into factors associated with school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness. A more comprehensive document is available from the Principal group contact person for your district.

The research area and the process to be used has been approved by my supervisory committee and the research ethics committee at the University of Alberta. Denis Ralph, Director of Education has also endorsed the research process for this area.

The NGT meetings will be held at the following times and locations:

> Tuesday 2nd August, 8.30 am. to 10.30 am., Ingle Heights Primary School, Furner Avenue, Ingle Farm: focus on school effectiveness;
>
> Tuesday 2nd August, 2 pm. to 4 pm., Broadmeadows Primary School, Heywood Street, Elizabeth North: focus on school ineffectiveness;
>
> Wednesday 3rd August, 8.30 am. to 10.30 am., Gilles Plains Primary School, Beatty Terrace, Hillcrest: focus on school ineffectiveness;
>
> Wednesday 3rd August, 2 pm. to 4 pm., Salisbury Downs Primary School, Paramount Road, Salisbury Downs: focus on school effectiveness;
>
> Friday 12 th August, 9am. to 11 am., Gawler Primary School, Nixon Terrace, Gawler: focus on school effectiveness.

Groups of 10 - 15 are required for each meeting and to assist with planning you are requested to telephone 256 8224 or 256 8230 at the area office to indicate your attendance and preferred location.

Your cooperation «addressee» in being part of this research would be greatly appreciated and I urge you to assist me by attending one of the meetings.

Yours sincerely

N Highett

Neville Highett
Superintendent of Schools

NAE

Northern Area
Education Office
Elizabeth House
Oxenham Drive
Elizabeth 5112
Telephone 256 8111
Fax 256 8252

Education
Department
of South
Australia

NORTHERN AREA EDUCATION

«name»
«school»
«courier»

Dear «addressee»,
I am a Superintendent of Schools currently studying at the University of Alberta. As part of my research I am investigating school effectiveness and school ineffectiveness factors and the interventions that various constituent groups make when they perceive a school does not meet their criteria of effectiveness.

I write to seek your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaire for principals. The questions pay particular attention to effectiveness criteria developed by 73 principals within the Northern Area at a series of meetings held earlier this term. As second part of this research I will interview parents, principals and superintendents of schools to obtain more detailed information about important issues arising from the questionnaire responses. If you are willing to be interviewed please indicate this on the attached response sheet.

I realize «addressee» that this is a busy time of the term for you but I would appreciate you spending the fifty five minutes required to complete the questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire via the courier, in the envelope provided. The questionnaires are not identified and all responses will be treated as *strictly confidential* .

At the conclusion of the research a copy of the report will be available in the Northern Area Resource Centre and a summary report will be made available to each District of the Area.

Your cooperation in this study is greatly appreciated.
Yours faithfully

Neville Highett
6th September 1988

NAE

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Education
Department
of South
Australia

NORTHERN AREA EDUCATION

«name»
«school»
«courier»

Dear «addressee»,

Near the end of last term I sent you a questionnaire on school effectiveness. My records indicate that you have not forwarded a response sheet and I therefore assume that you have not at this time completed and forwarded a questionnaire

I realize «addressee» that the end of last term was very hectic with the added administrative requirements of the staffing exercise as well as the myriad other tasks and activities that required your attention. However I would value your responses on the questionnaire and urge you to assist me by completing the questionnaire this week and forwarding via the courier to the Area Office.

I realize that the questionnaires that you distributed for me, to the selected parents were difficult and their completion was a time consuming task. However I would appreciate a follow up phone call from yourself to the sample of parents, urging their cooperation in completing and forwarding the questionnaires. The confidentiality process I used means that I have no way of knowing which parents from your school have forwarded a questionnaire, hence I need your assistance with the follow up.

I have completed interviews of volunteer principals, superintendents and some parents. I do however have some parents continuing to interview other parents who volunteered for an interview when they forwarded their questionnaires. These interviews should be completed by the end of October.

As I leave for Canada today, Helen Ellis has agreed to forward your questionnaire to me at the University of Alberta and so have it included in the sample from the Area. I value the support that you have given me in this research by attending the NGT meeting and the distribution of the parent questionnaires and hence I and look forward «addressee» to receiving your completed questionnaire.

Your faithfully

Neville Highett
Superintendent, Education Review Unit.
17th October, 1988

5 5

			2
nal program so that classes at me work	N·S M E	1 2 3 4 5	31,32
vities for students	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	33,34
ve different	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	35,36
	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	37,38
	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	39,40
attainment	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	41,42
ported to the parents	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	43,44
s the efforts and	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	45,46
e school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	47,48
ent program	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	49,50
	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	51,52
w technology	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	53,54
nowledges the work and l staff members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	55,56
nent to the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	57,58
with new teaching methods	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	59,60
ider change	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	61,62
onal activities	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	63,64
sional development activities school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	65,66
of motivation to their work	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	67,68
ff	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	69,70
members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	71,72
pal/deputy principal	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	73,74
in operation	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	75,76
Factors			2(1-5)
am to the parents	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	6,7

Please assess the importance of each of the following factors for achieving school effectiveness in schools containing students in the CPC - 7 range, using the same scale as before, namely:

Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Extremely Important
N	S	M	E

Please also assess the effectiveness of your school for each question, using the following scale:

Non Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Highly Effective	Extremely Effective
1	2	3	4	5

	Importance for School Effectiveness	Effectiveness of your school	Office use
37. Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	8,9
38. Enlisting support of parent bodies	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	10,11
39. Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	12,13
40. Identifying the expectations of the parent community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	14,15
41. Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	16,17
Financial Management Factors			
42. A school budget that is developed with the involvement of (a) teaching staff or (b) all staff or (c) staff and parents			18
Please circle (a) or (b) or (c)	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	19,20
43. Gaining of additional resources	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	21,22
44. Successful fund raising activities within the community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	23,24
Physical Facility Factors			
45. Well maintained school grounds and facilities	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	25,26
46. School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	27,28
Management Factors			
47. Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	29,30
48. Appointment of specialist teachers	N S M E		31,32

49. What specialist teachers, if any, would you appoint to your school?
(Please indicate in priority order)

(a) ______________________________

(b) ______________________________ (c) ______________________________

				4
50.	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	33,34
51.	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	35,36
52.	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	37,38
53.	The attraction of additional students to your school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	39,40
54.	The number of students in the school		N S M E	41
55.	What is the enrollment in the ideal size school ? ______________ students			42-44
56.	What other factors that are not identified above, contribute to the effectiveness of schools? (Please specify)			
	(a)			
	....	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	
	(b)			
	....	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	
	(c)			
	....	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	
57.	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of your school	....	1 2 3 4 5	45

58. Who is the best person / group to judge the effectiveness of an individual school?

....

59. What three key factors currently stop your school from achieving maximum effectiveness?
(Please list them in priority order)

(a) ....

....

(b) ....

....

(c) ....

....

5

60. What are the three most important criteria for assessing the effectiveness of a school with students in the CPC - 7 range?

(Please list them in priority order)

(a) ....

....

(b) ....

....

(c) ....

....

Please feel free to add any additional comments about any aspect of the above questions or to make statements about the judgement of school ineffectiveness or school effectiveness.

Please turn over to Section B

SECTION B: Principal Effectiveness

Please assess the importance of each of the following factors for achieving school effectiveness in schools containing students in the CPC - 7 range, using the following scale:

Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Extremely Important
N	**S**	**M**	**E**

Please also assess the effectiveness of your effectiveness as a leader for each question, using the following scale:

Non Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Highly Effective	Extremely Effective
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Please answer all questions

Circle the selected letter and number

Principal Effectiveness Factor	Importance for School Effectiveness	Your Effectiveness	Office use only
			3(1-5)
61. The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	6,7
62. Principal acting as a role model	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	8,9
63. Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	10,11
64. Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	12,13
65. Principal keeping up to date with new teaching methods	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	14,15
66. Principal is prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	16,17
67. Two way channels of communication with:			
(a) all staff	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	18,19
(b) students	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	20,21
(c) parents	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	22,23
(d) wider non parent community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	24,25
68. Supervising the work of professional staff members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	26,27
69. Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	28,29
70. Providing feedback to staff members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	30,31
71. Improving the work of staff members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	32,33
72. Fostering the professional growth of staff members	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	34,35

73.	Maintaining high expectations of staff	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	36,37	7
74.	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	38,39	
75.	Maintaining an open school climate	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	40,41	
76.	Allocating of teachers to classes by the principal	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	42,43	
77.	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	44,45	
78.	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	46,47	
79.	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	48,49	
80.	Principal involvement in district / area decision making processes	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	50,51	
81.	The principal's relationship with the Superintendent of Schools	N S M E	1 2 3 4 5	52,53	
82.	Principal participation in the selection of professional staff members	N S M E		54	
83.	Would you please rate your overall effectiveness as a principal	....	1 2 3 4 5	55	

84. What are the three most important criteria for assessing the effectiveness of a principal of a school with students in the CPC - 7 range?

(Please list them in priority order)

(a) ....

....

(b) ....

....

(c) ....

....

85. How important is the principal's effectiveness for attaining overall school effectiveness in a school with students in the CPC - 7 range? (Please circle one letter)

N	S	M	E
Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Extremely Important

86. In your opinion, what one aspect contributes most to a school principal's influence on the achievement of school goals? 56

....

87. What three key factors currently stop you from gaining maximum personal effectiveness within your school?

8

(Please list them in priority order)

(a) ....

....

(b) ....

....

(c) ....

....

88. In what way (if any) do the effectiveness criteria differ among primary and junior primary schools?

....

....

....

Section C: School Data

	Office use only
Please check ( ) the appropriate answer.	(5) 1-5
1. What year levels are in your school? (Please indicate all)	
CPC ___ Reception ___ Year 1 ___ Year 2 ___ Year 3 ___ Year 4 ___ Year 5 ___ Year 6 ___ Year 7 ___	6-14
2. What is your total staff target? (Include all non formulae staff) _________	15-17
3. What is your school enrollment? ___________	18-20
Section D: Information about respondent	
4. What is your gender? (1) female ___ (2) male ___	21
5. What was your age on 1 January 1988?	
(1) under 30 ___ (2) 30 -39 ___ (3) 40 - 49 ___	
(4) 50 - 59 ___ (5) 60 or older ___	22
6. For how many years have you been in your present location? (Count the current year as a full year) _____	23,24
7. For how many years have you been a principal? (Count the current year as a full year) _____	25,26
8. How many years since your first appointment in education? (Count the current year as a full year) _____	27,28

Please return the questionnaire in one of the envelopes provided.

Please complete the attached return slip and return it in the other envelope. Please indicate on the return slip if you are willing to be interviewed.

Separate envelopes are provided to ensure anonymity for your questionnaire response.

Thank you for your cooperation and the time that you have spent on this task.

Response Advice Sheet

Mr Neville Highett
Northern Area Education Office
Elizabeth House
Oxenham Drive
Elizabeth
R2/37

Dear Neville,

I wish to advise you that I have today completed and forwarded the questionnaire on School Effectiveness:

(please complete as necessary)

(a). I am not available for interview

or

(b). I am available for interview and can be contacted at telephone number

____

Yours faithfully

....

(please print name)

.... September, 1988

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions for R-7 School Principals

1. Describe an occasion when a parent had a reason/cause to contact the school.

Issues: What precipitated the contact?

What happened as a result of the contact?

Were you satisfied with the actions of the school?

Did you have contact with the parent about the same issue at a later date?

Repeat as necessary

2. Describe an occasion when you became concerned with some aspect of a teachers performance. What did you do as a result of making that judgement?

Issues: What precipitated that concern?

What happened as a result of the contact?

Were you satisfied with the resultant actions of the teacher?

Did you have contact with the teacher about the same issue at a later date?

Repeat as necessary

3. An important aspect to emerge from the NGT meetings held earlier this term was "maintaining an appropriate school climate." What sort of climate do you consider to be "appropriate" for achieving effectiveness in an R-7 school?
4. How important is frequent evaluation of students against defined standards for school effectiveness?
5. What form of student assessment and feedback to students and parents is followed by an effective school?
6. How important is parental involvement in the school decision making processes?
7. In your opinion what is the prime indicator of the effectiveness of an R-7 school?
8. What factor most inhibits the effectiveness of an R-7 school?
9. What suggestions do you have for improving the effectiveness of R-7 schools?
10. Should the principal be the instructional leader of the school?
11. What criteria would you employ if you were able to select the principal of a school?
12. How important is the principals role in supervising the work of teachers for school effectiveness?
13. In your opinion what is the prime indicator of the effectiveness of an R-7 school principal?
14. What factor most inhibits the effectiveness of an R-7 school principal?
15. What suggestions do you have for improving the effectiveness of R-7 school principals?
16. What relationship, if any, is there between your effectiveness as a principal and the effectiveness of your school?

APPENDIX D

ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table D.1

Parent Ratings of the Effectiveness of Schools on all the Effectiveness Items
Sorted According to Mean Value
(n = 190)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely		
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	2.7	3.7	15.4	34.0	44.1	4.13	0.99
27	Staff keeping up to date with new teaching methods	1.1	3.2	16.0	41.7	38.0	4.12	0.87
65	Principal keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	2.1	3.7	15.5	36.9	41.7	4.12	0.95
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	2.2	4.3	18.3	30.6	44.6	4.11	0.99
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	2.7	7.6	14.1	37.8	37.8	4.01	1.04
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the paren[illegible]	1.6	10.1	17.5	30.2	40.7	3.98	1.06
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	3.2	4.2	21.7	35.4	35.4	3.97	1.02
57	Please rate the overall effectiveness of the school	0.0	2.7	26.9	42.3	28.0	3.96	0.81
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	0.0	4.8	27.7	37.2	30.3	3.93	0.88
83	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of the principal?	3.2	6.5	18.8	37.1	34.4	3.93	1.04
77	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	2.2	6.0	21.2	39.1	31.5	3.92	0.98
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	1.6	4.9	22.4	43.7	27.3	3.90	0.92
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	1.6	8.6	20.9	36.9	32.1	3.89	1.01
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	4.3	7.1	15.2	42.4	31.0	3.89	1.06
70	Providing feedback to staff members	2.7	7.1	20.2	38.8	31.1	3.89	1.02
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	3.7	8.5	20.6	31.7	35.4	3.87	1.11
16	High student morale	1.1	7.0	23.7	40.9	27.4	3.87	0.94
62	Principal acting as a role model	4.3	13.0	13.0	32.4	37.3	3.85	1.18
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	2.7	10.9	19.7	33.3	33.3	3.84	1.09
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	0.5	7.9	27.0	37.0	27.5	3.83	0.94
22	A student behavior management program	1.6	10.1	20.7	40.4	27.1	3.81	1.00
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	1.6	9.8	20.7	41.8	26.1	3.81	0.99
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	4.3	9.1	21.0	32.8	32.8	3.81	1.12
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	0.5	6.4	24.5	49.5	19.1	3.80	0.84
35	A decision making policy that is in operation	2.7	9.3	24.0	32.8	31.1	3.80	1.07

continued

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely		
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	1.6	9.7	25.3	37.1	26.3	3.77	1.00
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	3.3	9.9	19.3	42.0	25.4	3.76	1.05
81	The principal's relationship with the SOS	0.6	10.5	24.1	42.0	22.8	3.76	0.94
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	3.8	10.8	22.0	32.8	30.6	3.76	1.12
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	1.1	10.1	29.1	31.7	28.0	3.76	1.01
21	High student satisfaction with the school	0.5	9.1	28.5	39.8	22.0	3.74	0.92
23	High staff morale	1.6	10.3	27.2	37.0	23.9	3.71	1.00
44	Successful fundraising activities within the community	3.2	11.7	22.3	36.7	26.1	3.71	1.08
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	0.5	7.7	34.4	36.1	21.3	3.70	0.91
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	4.8	12.9	21.0	30.6	30.6	3.69	1.18
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	2.2	9.8	27.3	38.3	22.4	3.69	1.00
63	Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	4.4	11.5	23.0	33.3	27.9	3.69	1.13
43	Gaining of additional resources	1.6	10.3	27.6	39.5	21.1	3.68	0.97
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	2.1	11.2	29.4	31.0	26.2	3.68	1.05
24	Staff with knowledge of new technology	3.2	7.9	33.3	29.6	25.9	3.67	1.05
71	Improving the work of staff members	2.7	8.1	29.2	39.5	20.5	3.67	0.98
51	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	3.3	6.6	26.4	47.8	15.9	3.67	0.94
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	1.1	11.8	28.0	38.7	20.4	3.66	0.97
15	Recognition of individuals who have different cultures and values	5.3	10.1	26.6	29.8	28.2	3.65	1.15
69	Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	2.8	9.1	31.3	34.7	22.2	3.64	1.02
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	1.7	10.8	32.4	33.5	21.6	3.63	1.00
75	Maintaining an open school climate	3.4	7.9	31.1	38.4	19.2	3.62	0.99
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	1.6	15.4	23.9	39.4	19.7	3.60	1.02
50	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	0.6	10.0	37.8	35.0	16.7	3.57	0.90
52	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	2.7	12.5	29.9	34.8	20.1	3.57	1.03
6	Academic subjects emphasized	1.6	9.0	37.8	38.3	13.3	3.53	0.89
28	Teachers willing to consider change	4.3	8.6	33.3	37.6	16.1	3.53	1.00
68	Supervising the work of professional staff members	5.1	9.6	32.8	35.6	16.9	3.50	1.05

continued

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f)						Standard
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Deviation
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff & parents	2.2	11.8	36.0	36.0	14.0	3.48	0.95
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	3.7	15.4	30.3	31.4	19.1	3.47	1.08
76	Allocating teachers to classes by the principal	3.5	7.5	39.3	38.7	11.0	3.46	0.91
17	High expectations of students	2.7	11.8	35.8	36.4	13.4	3.46	0.96
32	Leadership roles shared among staff	4.3	13.0	34.8	28.3	19.6	3.46	1.08
13	Coordination of the instructional program so that classes at the same year level do the same work	4.3	10.7	39.0	27.8	18.2	3.45	1.04
7	Students encouraged to strive for academic success	3.2	11.1	36.5	37.0	12.2	3.44	0.95
47	Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	2.1	11.8	39.6	33.2	13.4	3.44	0.94
5	School goals communicated to students	7.0	10.7	38.0	26.7	17.6	3.37	1.11
14	Provision of extra-curricular activities for students	4.9	15.7	32.4	31.9	15.1	3.37	1.07
9	Achievement in language arts is emphasized	8.1	14.1	36.8	28.1	13.0	3.24	1.10
79	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	7.2	18.2	37.0	23.8	13.8	3.19	1.11
80	Principal involvement in district/area decision making processes	11.5	20.7	26.4	27.0	14.4	3.12	1.23
8	Evaluating students against national standards	6.6	17.5	44.3	23.5	8.2	3.09	1.00
41	Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	7.0	21.6	36.8	24.3	10.3	3.09	1.07
25	A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members	13.0	15.3	39.5	22.6	9.6	3.01	1.14
67(d)	Two-way channels of communication with wider non parent community	11.5	23.1	33.0	22.0	10.4	2.97	1.16
53	The attraction of additional students to your school	13.6	19.3	35.2	20.5	11.4	2.97	1.19
4	A written review and evaluation process to monitor progress towards achievement of school goals	12.4	18.9	39.5	18.9	10.3	2.96	1.14
3	A written public plan for achieving school goals	14.7	20.1	34.8	19.6	10.9	2.92	1.19
40	Identifying the expectations of the parent community	8.8	28.6	34.1	23.1	5.5	2.88	1.04
74	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	12.1	27.3	37.0	17.6	6.1	2.78	1.07
39	Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	20.4	32.0	32.6	11.0	3.9	2.46	1.06
37	Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	20.1	33.0	35.8	8.9	2.2	2.40	0.98

Table D.2

Parent Intercorrelation Coefficients of School Effectiveness Factors & Global Principal and School Effectiveness

Factor	Factor								
	Principal as Nexus	Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	Student Centeredness	Facilities & Financial Management	Goal Emphasis	Parental Support	Academic Program Focus	Global School Effectiveness	Global Principal Effectiveness
Principal as Nexus	1.000	0.660	0.617	0.578	0.540	0.641	0.547	0.551	0.823
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	0.660	1.000	0.734	0.560	0.583	0.687	0.622	0.605	0.547
Student Centeredness	0.617	0.734	1.000	0.608	0.593	0.613	0.676	0.629	0.543
Facilities and Financial Management	0.578	0.560	0.608	1.000	0.499	0.524	0.540	0.530	0.405
Goal Emphasis	0.540	0.583	0.593	0.499	1.000	0.514	0.504	0.529	0.427
Parental Support	0.641	0.687	0.613	0.524	0.514	1.000	0.527	0.538	0.534
Academic Program Focus	0.547	0.622	0.676	0.540	0.504	0.527	1.000	0.502	0.478
Global School Effectiveness	0.551	0.605	0.629	0.530	0.529	0.538	0.502	1.000	0.507
Global Principal Effectiveness	0.823	0.547	0.543	0.405	0.427	0.534	0.478	0.507	1.000

Table D.3

Principal Ratings of the Effectiveness of Schools on all the Effectiveness Items
Sorted According to Mean Value
(n = 84)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely		
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	0.0	2.4	10.8	60.2	26.5	4.11	0.68
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	1.2	6.0	7.1	52.4	33.3	4.11	0.87
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	0.0	2.4	14.3	58.3	25.0	4.06	0.70
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	1.2	3.6	14.3	51.2	29.8	4.05	0.84
16	High student morale	0.0	1.2	20.5	51.8	26.5	4.04	0.72
77	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	0.0	2.5	19.8	50.6	27.2	4.03	0.76
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	0.0	1.2	25.3	49.4	24.1	3.96	0.74
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	0.0	3.6	24.1	47.0	25.3	3.94	0.80
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	0.0	2.4	20.5	59.0	18.1	3.93	0.70
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	0.0	0.0	24.7	58.0	17.3	3.93	0.65
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	0.0	3.6	26.2	45.2	25.0	3.92	0.81
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	0.0	3.6	31.3	36.1	28.9	3.90	0.86
22	A student behavior management program	0.0	2.4	29.8	44.0	23.8	3.89	0.79
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	1.2	4.8	22.6	46.4	25.0	3.89	0.88
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	0.0	1.2	28.6	51.2	19.0	3.88	0.72
75	Maintaining an open school climate	0.0	2.5	23.5	60.5	13.6	3.85	0.67
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	2.4	3.6	28.6	38.1	27.4	3.85	0.95
9	Achievement in language arts is emphasized	0.0	1.2	34.9	43.4	20.5	3.83	0.76
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	0.0	2.4	30.1	49.4	18.1	3.83	0.75
23	High staff morale	0.0	4.8	26.2	52.4	16.7	3.81	0.77
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	0.0	2.4	31.0	50.0	16.7	3.81	0.74
65	Principal keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	1.2	0.0	28.9	57.8	12.0	3.80	0.69
51	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	0.0	3.7	33.3	43.2	19.8	3.79	0.80
57	Please rate the overall effectiveness of your school	0.0	2.5	28.4	58.0	11.1	3.78	0.67

continued

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f)						Standard
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Deviation
21	High student satisfaction with the school	0.0	2.4	31.0	54.8	11.9	3.76	0.69
76	Allocating teachers to classes by the principal	0.0	2.7	32.0	52.0	13.3	3.76	0.71
83	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of the principal?	0.0	3.7	26.8	59.8	9.8	3.76	0.68
32	Leadership roles shared among staff	2.4	4.8	25.0	51.2	16.7	3.75	0.88
15	Recognition of individuals who have different cultures and values	0.0	8.5	28.0	45.1	18.3	3.73	0.86
17	High expectations of students	0.0	2.4	35.4	48.8	13.4	3.73	0.72
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	0.0	8.3	33.3	35.7	22.6	3.73	0.91
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	1.2	2.4	32.5	50.6	13.3	3.72	0.77
44	Successful fundraising activities within the community	3.6	8.3	22.6	45.2	20.2	3.70	1.00
62	Principal acting as a role model	0.0	4.8	34.9	45.8	14.5	3.70	0.78
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	0.0	10.7	26.2	46.4	16.7	3.69	0.88
81	The principal's relationship with the SOS	0.0	9.9	32.1	38.3	19.8	3.68	0.91
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	0.0	6.0	36.9	41.7	15.5	3.67	0.81
35	A decision-making policy that is in operation	1.2	11.9	28.6	36.9	21.4	3.66	0.99
43	Gaining of additional resources	1.2	7.1	32.1	44.0	15.5	3.66	0.87
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	0.0	3.6	37.3	49.4	9.6	3.65	0.71
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	0.0	6.1	41.5	34.1	18.3	3.65	0.85
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	0.0	6.2	37.0	43.2	13.6	3.64	0.80
27	Staff keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	0.0	7.1	38.1	40.5	14.3	3.62	0.82
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	0.0	6.0	36.9	46.4	10.7	3.62	0.76
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	0.0	8.3	39.3	36.9	15.5	3.60	0.85
28	Teachers willing to consider change	0.0	7.1	38.1	44.0	10.7	3.58	0.78
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	0.0	7.1	40.5	41.7	10.7	3.56	0.78
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	0.0	8.5	36.6	46.3	8.5	3.55	0.77
70	Providing feedback to staff members	1.2	4.8	42.9	40.5	10.7	3.55	0.80
7	Students encouraged to strive for academic success	0.0	4.8	44.6	42.2	8.4	3.54	0.72
47	Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	0.0	11.9	36.9	40.5	10.7	3.50	0.84
50	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	0.0	9.8	39.0	42.7	8.5	3.50	0.79

continued

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
13	Coordination of the instructional program so that classes at the same year level do the same work	3.9	9.1	36.4	35.1	15.6	3.49	1.00
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	0.0	4.8	51.8	36.1	7.2	3.46	0.70
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	1.2	6.0	50.0	32.1	10.7	3.45	0.81
63	Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	0.0	7.2	48.2	38.6	6.0	3.43	0.72
6	Academic subjects emphasized	1.2	9.9	38.3	45.7	4.9	3.43	0.79
71	Improving the work of staff members	1.2	6.0	53.0	33.7	6.0	3.37	0.74
68	Supervising the work of professional staff members	1.2	7.2	51.8	34.9	4.8	3.35	0.74
53	The attraction of additional students to your school	4.9	18.5	34.6	25.9	16.0	3.30	1.10
24	Staff with knowledge of new technology	0.0	16.7	45.2	33.3	4.8	3.26	0.79
25	A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members	3.6	15.5	44.0	28.6	8.3	3.23	0.94
79	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	1.2	19.8	45.7	23.5	9.9	3.21	0.92
80	Principal involvement in district/area decision making processes	4.9	19.5	37.8	25.6	12.2	3.21	1.05
41	Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	2.4	13.1	52.4	26.2	6.0	3.20	0.83
14	Provision of extra-curricular activities for students	6.1	17.1	39.0	26.8	11.0	3.20	1.05
52	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	3.7	14.8	44.4	33.3	3.7	3.19	0.87
5	School goals communicated to students	3.6	20.5	39.8	28.9	7.2	3.16	0.96
69	Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	1.2	13.1	59.5	21.4	4.8	3.16	0.75
40	Identifying the expectations of the parent community	2.4	17.9	47.6	28.6	3.6	3.13	0.83
3	A written public plan for achieving school goals	4.8	22.9	41.0	27.7	3.6	3.02	0.92
67(d)	Two-way channels of communication with wider non parent community	2.4	32.9	32.9	24.4	7.3	3.01	0.59
74	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	2.5	25.9	46.9	22.2	2.5	2.96	0.83
37	Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	6.0	23.8	47.6	17.9	4.8	2.92	0.92
39	Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	6.0	32.5	41.0	13.3	7.2	2.83	0.99
4	A written review and evaluation process to monitor progress towards achievement of school goals	9.8	41.5	36.6	9.8	2.4	2.54	0.89
8	Evaluating students against national standards	25.6	30.5	32.9	9.8	1.2	2.31	1.00

Table D.4

Principal Intercorrelation Coefficients of School Effectiveness Factors & Global Principal and School Effectiveness

	Factor								
Factor	Principal as Nexus	Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	Student Centeredness	Facilities & Financial Management	Goal Emphasis	Parental Support	Academic Program Focus	Global School Effectiveness	Global Principal Effectiveness
Principal as Nexus	1.000	0.742	0.641	0.437	0.547	0.504	0.670	0.719	0.627
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	0.742	1.000	0.685	0.470	0.620	0.442	0.573	0.617	0.526
Student Centeredness	0.641	0.685	1.000	0.344	0.470	0.481	0.699	0.504	0.373
Facilities and Financial Management	0.437	0.470	0.344	1.000	0.467	0.313	0.376	0.542	0.393
Goal Emphasis	0.547	0.620	0.470	0.467	1.000	0.471	0.401	0.621	0.436
Parental Support	0.504	0.442	0.481	0.313	0.471	1.000	0.325	0.473	0.219
Academic Program Focus	0.670	0.573	0.699	0.376	0.401	0.325	1.000	0.517	0.364
Global School Effectiveness	0.719	0.617	0.504	0.542	0.621	0.473	0.517	1.000	0.553
Global Principal Effectiveness	0.627	0.526	0.373	0.393	0.436	0.219	0.364	0.553	1.000

Table D.5

Superintendent Ratings of the Effectiveness of Schools on all of the Effectiveness Items
Sorted According to Mean Value
(n = 57)

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
45	Well maintained school grounds and facilities	0.0	8.8	28.1	31.6	31.6	3.86	0.97
81	The principal's relationship with the SOS	3.5	17.5	17.5	24.6	36.8	3.74	1.23
20	A reward structure that acknowledges the efforts and achievements of students	0.0	15.8	28.1	33.3	22.8	3.63	1.01
9	Achievement in language arts is emphasized	0.0	14.5	36.4	27.3	21.8	3.56	1.00
10	The development of social skills is emphasized	1.8	21.1	22.8	28.1	26.3	3.56	1.15
16	High student morale	5.3	14.0	29.8	26.3	24.6	3.51	1.17
17	High expectations of students	3.5	17.5	22.8	36.8	19.3	3.51	1.10
44	Successful fundraising activities within the community	0.0	17.5	26.3	43.9	12.3	3.51	0.93
77	Maintaining the day to day administrative operation of the school	3.6	18.2	29.1	23.6	25.5	3.49	1.17
14	Provision of extra-curricular activities for students	5.3	17.5	28.1	22.8	26.3	3.47	1.21
30	Teachers engaged in school-focussed professional development activities for the improvement of the school	0.0	28.1	24.6	19.3	28.1	3.47	1.18
43	Gaining of additional resources	5.3	21.1	22.8	24.6	26.3	3.46	1.24
19	Student progress and attainment is reported to the parents	5.3	15.8	26.3	35.1	17.5	3.44	1.12
78	Recognizing the uniqueness of each school community	8.8	19.3	17.5	28.1	26.3	3.44	1.31
46	School internal environment that indicates care and attention to detail	3.5	22.8	22.8	29.8	21.1	3.42	1.17
73	Maintaining high expectations of staff	8.8	21.1	14.0	31.6	24.6	3.42	1.31
31	Staff who display a high level of motivation to their work	5.3	17.5	29.8	26.3	21.1	3.40	1.16
64	Principal actively involved in the curriculum development activities of the school	15.8	14.0	15.8	24.6	29.8	3.39	1.45
2	Joint principal-staff planning to accomplish school goals	10.5	19.3	17.5	29.8	22.8	3.35	1.32
51	Clearly defined roles for administrative responsibilities	10.5	19.3	21.1	24.6	24.6	3.33	1.33
67(a)	Two-way channels of communication with all staff	14.0	15.8	19.3	24.6	26.3	3.33	1.39
72	Fostering the professional growth of staff members	8.8	26.3	12.3	28.1	24.6	3.33	1.34
75	Maintaining an open school climate	14.5	14.5	23.6	20.0	27.3	3.31	1.40
27	Staff keeping up-to-date with new teaching methods	5.3	22.8	26.3	28.1	17.5	3.30	1.16

continued

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f) Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely	Mean	Standard Deviation
15	Recognition of individuals who have different cultures and values	12.3	15.8	26.3	22.8	22.8	3.28	1.32
22	A student behavior management program	15.8	12.3	17.5	36.8	17.5	3.28	1.33
79	Promoting the school in the wider non parent community	10.5	15.8	29.8	22.8	21.1	3.28	1.26
50	Mutual cooperation among people with different roles within the school	3.6	23.6	27.3	32.7	12.7	3.27	1.08
21	High student satisfaction with the school	8.8	14.0	35.1	26.3	15.8	3.26	1.16
61	The ability of the principal to declare a personal set of goals for the school	10.5	28.1	12.3	22.8	26.3	3.26	1.40
66	Principal prepared to learn new ideas, approaches	17.9	19.6	10.7	23.2	28.6	3.25	1.51
7	Students encouraged to strive for academic success	5.3	17.5	33.3	35.1	8.8	3.25	1.02
24	Staff with knowledge of new technology	7.0	22.8	19.3	40.4	10.5	3.25	1.14
26	Staff displaying commitment to the school	15.8	14.0	21.1	28.1	21.1	3.25	1.37
38	Enlisting support of parent bodies	8.8	21.1	21.1	36.8	12.3	3.23	1.18
42	School budget developed with all staff and parents	12.3	19.3	19.3	31.6	17.5	3.23	1.30
52	Utilization of the latest technology within the school	5.3	21.1	33.3	26.3	14.0	3.23	1.10
76	Allocating teachers to classes by the principal	5.3	15.8	35.1	38.6	5.3	3.23	0.96
28	Teachers willing to consider change	7.0	26.3	21.1	29.8	15.8	3.21	1.21
29	Teachers engaged in personal professional development activities	10.5	21.1	21.1	31.6	15.8	3.21	1.25
57	Please rate the overall effectiveness of the school	3.5	29.8	22.8	29.8	14.0	3.21	1.13
67(c)	Two-way channels of communication with parents	15.8	12.3	24.6	29.8	17.5	3.21	1.32
23	High staff morale	15.8	21.1	17.5	19.3	26.3	3.19	1.45
33	Job satisfaction of individual staff members	10.5	22.8	21.1	28.1	17.5	3.19	1.27
62	Principal acting as a role model	22.8	14.0	12.3	22.8	28.1	3.19	1.55
36	Clarifying the educational program to the parents	16.1	23.2	14.3	21.4	25.0	3.16	1.45
35	A decision making policy that is in operation	21.1	19.3	8.8	24.6	26.3	3.16	1.53
13	Coordination of the instructional program so that classes at the same year level do the same work	5.7	22.6	30.2	34.0	7.5	3.15	1.05
32	Leadership roles shared among staff	14.0	22.8	21.1	21.1	21.1	3.12	1.36
65	Principal keeping up to date with new teaching methods	17.5	19.3	15.8	28.1	19.3	3.12	1.40
34	Degree of trust between principal/deputy principal and other members of staff	20.0	20.0	14.5	20.0	25.5	3.11	1.50
6	Academic subjects emphasized	3.5	15.8	50.9	26.3	3.5	3.11	0.84
11	The development of student creativity is emphasized	7.0	26.3	31.6	21.1	14.0	3.09	1.15

continued

Item #	Item	Effectiveness (%f)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		Not	Slightly	Moderately	Highly	Extremely		
12	Coordination of the continuity of the instructional program between year levels	14.0	17.5	26.3	31.6	10.5	3.07	1.22
83	Would you please rate the overall effectiveness of the principal?	19.3	14.0	22.8	28.1	15.8	3.07	1.36
67(b)	Two-way channels of communication with students	8.8	24.6	29.8	26.3	10.5	3.05	1.14
37	Promoting the educational program of the school to the wider non parent community	21.1	17.5	19.3	24.6	17.5	3.00	1.41
18	Monitoring of student progress and attainment with feedback to the students	8.8	26.3	28.1	31.6	5.3	2.98	1.08
1	School goals set cooperatively with staff and parents	17.5	26.3	14.0	29.8	12.3	2.93	1.33
47	Problems are regarded as opportunities to seek improvement	26.3	10.5	22.8	24.6	15.8	2.93	1.44
70	Providing feedback to staff members	24.6	15.8	21.1	19.3	19.3	2.93	1.46
80	Principal involvement in district/area decision making processes	29.8	14.0	10.5	24.6	21.1	2.93	1.57
63	Principal acting as instructional leader for the school	26.3	14.0	19.3	24.6	15.8	2.90	1.45
68	Supervising the work of professional staff members	28.1	12.3	19.3	22.8	17.5	2.90	1.48
5	School goals communicated to students	17.5	24.6	22.8	22.8	12.3	2.88	1.30
40	Identifying the expectations of the parent community	17.5	28.1	19.3	22.8	12.3	2.84	1.31
41	Adapting policies and procedures to respond to the school parent community expectations	22.8	19.3	24.6	17.5	15.8	2.84	1.39
25	A reward structure that acknowledges the work and achievements of individual staff members	21.1	26.3	12.3	29.8	10.5	2.83	1.35
74	The principal's social relationship with teachers outside of working hours	19.3	15.8	36.8	21.1	7.0	2.81	1.19
4	A written review and evaluation process to monitor progress towards achievement of school goals	31.6	10.5	19.3	24.6	14.0	2.79	1.47
39	Maintaining communication with the wider non parent community	24.6	24.6	21.1	15.8	14.0	2.70	1.38
67(d)	Two-way channels of communication with wider non parent community	21.1	26.3	21.1	24.6	7.0	2.70	1.25
71	Improving the work of staff members	31.6	7.0	29.8	22.8	8.8	2.70	1.36
3	A written public plan for achieving school goals	35.1	14.0	14.0	21.1	15.8	2.68	1.53
69	Evaluating the performance of professional staff members	26.3	19.3	24.6	19.3	10.5	2.68	1.34
8	Evaluating students against national standards	13.2	35.8	32.1	11.3	7.5	2.64	1.09

Table D.6

Superintendent Intercorrelation Coefficients of School Effectiveness Factors & Global Principal & School Effectiveness

Factor	Factor								
	Principal as Nexus	Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	Student Centeredness	Facilities & Financial Management	Goal Emphasis	Parental Support	Academic Program Focus	Global School Effectiveness	Global Principal Effectiveness
Principal as Nexus	1.000	0.927	0.851	0.838	0.900	0.912	0.866	0.918	0.916
Cooperative Improvement-Oriented Staff	0.927	1.000	0.889	0.860	0.836	0.898	0.830	0.897	0.879
Student Centeredness	0.851	0.889	1.000	0.813	0.777	0.856	0.856	0.807	0.771
Facilities and Financial Management	0.838	0.860	0.813	1.000	0.775	0.824	0.698	0.819	0.793
Goal Emphasis	0.900	0.836	0.777	0.775	1.000	0.837	0.857	0.857	0.843
Parental Support	0.912	0.898	0.856	0.824	0.837	1.000	0.802	0.923	0.856
Academic Program Focus	0.866	0.900	0.856	0.698	0.857	0.802	1.000	0.787	0.762
Global School Effectiveness	0.918	0.897	0.807	0.819	0.857	0.923	0.787	1.000	0.908
Global Principal Effectiveness	0.916	0.879	0.771	0.793	0.843	0.856	0.762	0.908	1.000